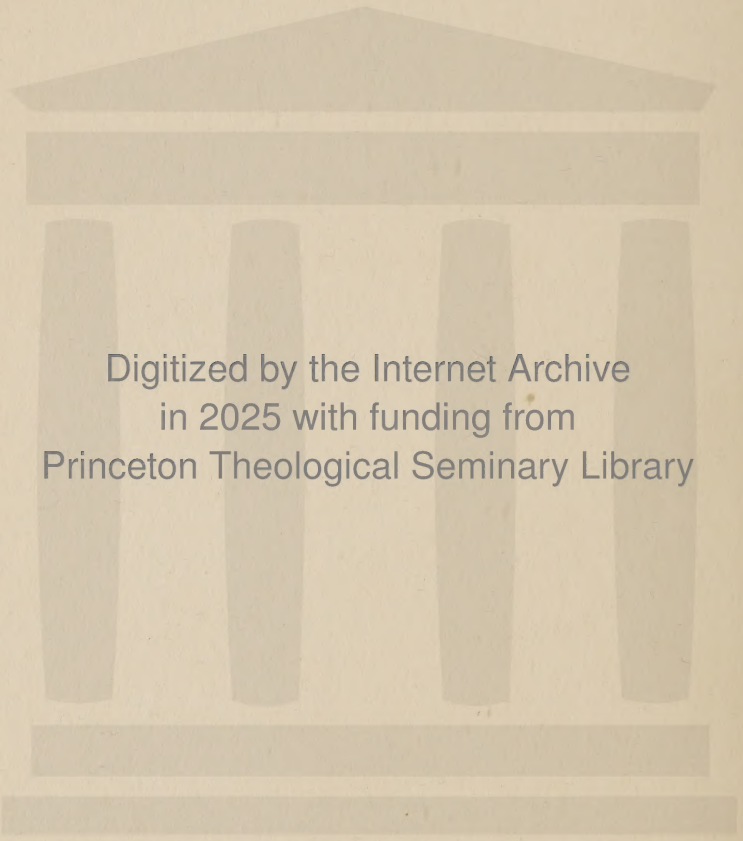
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RURAL SOCIOLOGY

THE FAMILY-FARM INSTITUTION

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BY
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TO

THE MEMORY OF

CHARLES HORTON COOLEY

PREFACE

A textbook in rural sociology should aid the student to gain increased understanding of the nature of rural social life. Every writer of such a textbook must go about the matter in his own way, his individual temperament and experience largely determining the nature of his contribution. There are objective facts to be collected and presented; there is also the need to help the reader to see the meaning of the factual material. Certain writers are inclined to stress the objective or external aspects of the subject, possibly with the conviction that otherwise they would be unscientific. Others are less concerned with the standing of sociology as a science, as natural scientists have understood the matter, than with whether they, as sociologists, are doing what they can to gain for themselves a penetrating insight into the workings of society and to aid in the development of a like attitude in others.

Since farmers are primarily persons rather than material objects, a natural science approach to a study of them would be hopelessly inadequate, or so it seems to me. The important facts in the lives of farming people (and thus of rural sociology) are the facts of their conscious experience and can be understood by the student only through the use of the imagination. One who is to understand must live the life—imaginatively, viewing the externals from the inside.

To understand rural society it is essential to see it in its relations to the larger society of which it is a part. To understand the country one must know the city too, for they are both parts of a single world. A victim of temperamental bias against the people and affairs of the towns is not likely to see farming people and their institutions with clear vision.

Whatever qualification I may possess as a writer in this field has its origin, as I see it, in the following sources:

1. Membership during my childhood and early adult years in a fairly typical family-farm unit, during which time my mental life was lived in a questioning mood. My questions had to do mainly with what at that time seemed to me the great gulf fixed by nature between farming people and others.

2. The teaching and personal influence of Professor Cooley. Although he concerned himself relatively little in any specific way with rural-urban relationships, he aided his students to see the relatedness of all people, wherever they may chance to live and whatever they may chance to do. He helped me to a social interpretation of my early

experiences, which could not have been greatly unlike those of millions of other farming people. For whatever of value there may be in my book, I am chiefly indebted to this leader among sociologists, my teacher for a few years, my steadfast friend and associate for a much longer period.

3. The cooperation of hundreds of farm-born students who have been in my classes in Rural Sociology at the University of Michigan during the past fourteen years. During this time various textbooks have been used with profit. The chief aim, however, has been to aid each student to develop for himself an interpretation in organic terms of his own experience as related to the family-farm institution. Even for those students who have never lived on farms, and they are, of course, in the majority, there is usually some experience with farming people to serve as a basis upon which to develop a constructively social point of view. An accumulation of valuable material is furnished by class discussion—a pooling of the items of experience and interpretative ideas, to which is added contributions in the form of papers written by members of previous classes.

Readers who are interested in the evolution in my own mind of the viewpoint set forth in this book may read a paper written some twenty years ago, which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for October, 1912 (Vol. 110, pp. 517–523).

Roy Hinman Holmes.

Ann Arbor, Michigan,
April, 1932.

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RURAL SOCIOLOGY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Field of Rural Sociology

Sociology is the science which views man from the standpoint of his group relationships. Rural sociology is a field of specialization within the more comprehensive science which considers rural man from the standpoint of his group relationships. Such statements are true enough, as far as they go. After having made them, however, one is still faced with the task of explaining what he conceives to be the field of rural sociology.

Modern agencies of communication and transportation have broken down physical barriers so far that rural life cannot be at all accurately described in terms of physical isolation. The drawing of a line between "rural" and "urban" at some definite numerical point, as at a population of 2,500 (the dividing point now in use by the U. S. Census Bureau) may be practically meaningless. Large numbers of individuals and families who live in the open country or in villages of less than 2,500 population, and who because of this fact are classified as rural people, are actually very real members of urban society, provided one is to distinguish at all between rural and urban. In other words, actual social grouping is a mental process, and in a modern society distances that may be physically measured and numbers that may be physically counted have relatively little to do with the matter.

In the search for a distinguishing factor that may serve as an ample justification for the existence of a rural sociology as opposed to an urban, not being willing to accept a criterion of distance or numbers, one may pass on to the matter of the type of social system in which the individual finds himself. In doing this, one discovers that what most people have in mind when they speak of the *rural* social problem is actually what they conceive to be the *farm* problem; and the farm problems they are considering are problems arising out of the *family*-farm organization, rather than out of agriculture in general.

One cannot be far wrong in asserting that nearly everything distinctive in American rural life, as contrasted with the life of the cities, is in some

way a product of the family-farm organization. If the occupation of agriculture were generally carried on under a factory system, as some writers predict will eventually be the case, it is difficult to see what place there then would be for a rural as opposed to an urban sociology. Problems there would be in plenty and, in the opinion of many, these problems would be more serious than those of the present. They would, however, be but slightly differentiated phases of the great social and industrial problems which characterize urban life and thus would stand in no need of separate consideration and treatment.

With the conditions as imagined, which may sometime prevail, the open country would obviously still remain a relatively sparsely settled area. The people living there, however, would all be classifiable in the same categories as those living in the cities: professional men, business men, skilled and unskilled laborers. Of farmers, as we now understand the term, there would be none. And our rural sociology is essentially a sociology of a family-farm population, rather than one of various specialized occupational groups.

Students who are just beginning their study of rural sociology are very likely to confuse in a most hopeless way three concepts that, for purposes of clear thinking, should be kept sharply distinct. These three, as has been implied above, are country life, the occupation of agriculture, and the family-farm unit. It is of course true that most country dwellers are engaged in the occupation of agriculture, and that most people so engaged are organized industrially into family units. There is, however, nothing inevitable about such a relationship. People may be drawn to the open country and spend a large part or all of their time there without working at the task of agricultural production. Also, men may be engaged in some phase of agricultural production without being members of a family economic unit. These latter individuals need not have their homes in the country.

Rural sociology is the sociology of family-farm life. It has to do in America with the distinctive problems of the thirty million or so members of our population who are organized into family-farm groups, and of the many others who are vitally affected in various ways by the life that is lived on family farms. Hired manual laborers, ministers, doctors, teachers who live in the open country and serve the family-farm population; small-town professional and business men whose dealings are mainly with farmers and with the retired farmers who form such a large part of village populations; newcomers in the cities whose adjustment to urban life is made difficult because of attitudes developed through family-farm living—all of these make up the large section of Americans whose problems are so distinctive as to demand specialized consideration through a special branch of social science, generally known as rural sociology.

If the fields of urban and rural sociology could be sharply distinguished one from the other along physical lines, the unadjusted residents of cities whose former homes were on farms would clearly be the exclusive concern of the former. As, however, society is a mental fact and sociology is a mental science, rural sociology must extend itself to include the interests of those from the farms who though *in* the city are not *of* it. It must concern itself with the reasons back of the difficulties the farm-born face in making satisfactory adjustments. In so far as it is an applied science, it must set itself to correct the faults in farm life which are in part responsible for such maladjustments.

At any one time, the large number of city residents developed under rural conditions, who are struggling unsuccessfully to fit themselves into the urban system, must be the joint concern of both rural and urban sociologists. Fundamentally, of course, there is only one sociology, and this one sociology is the science of all human relations. Special aspects of the whole world of human relations, however, may very well be given special consideration, and when this is done by specialized groups of students there must be a considerable area of overlapping. This is because the true selves of the individuals studied are primarily mental in nature instead of physical. The census taker's task is relatively simple. He has only to count the physical selves which he finds in a given physical area. The business of the sociologist is more baffling and at the same time more significant. He has to attempt to deal with mental selves, following them about wherever they may lead through all the world of thought.

The Approach in Social Theory

At the outset of this volume it seems desirable to set forth briefly the general sociological point of view which should be kept in mind throughout the study. Rural sociology, if allowed to become merely descriptive, is no longer in any real sense sociology. If it is to be more than descriptive, there is need for a unifying point of view. Nothing can be more fruitless than a discussion of rural or any other social problems by a group of individuals who are lacking in a rather definite common starting point to help them in the process of interpretation. I do not in the least maintain that my way of looking at society is the only defensible one. It is simply a definite approach in social theory, and one which, at least in major outline, is in excellent standing.

According to this way of viewing society, the individual has no separate existence. He exists only as a functioning member of a cooperating whole. Everything that goes to make the individual what he is has a history extending far back through the life of the race. This history, which one may, applying the term rather loosely, call the individual's heredity, is of two sorts: the biological, which comes to the individual

through the germ plasm, and the social, which reaches him through tradition. With the beginning of each individual's life, these two sources of influence come together and interweave themselves in such a way that they can never be unwoven. The individual is the unique personality he always is because he is the product of a unique combination of influences. This unique individual is *cause* as well as *result* in the larger life of which he is a part. Biologically, he *may* contribute to the future of the race; socially, he *must* make his individual contribution. As to the latter, he has no choice. What he *is* inevitably makes some sort of mark upon the lives of those with whom he is intimately associated.

Heredity and Environment.—In a general way, it may be said that biological heredity and social environment are of equal importance in their influence as sources of the individual's being. Each has its own part to play. Neither alone is of the slightest significance. Through heredity, the individual derives certain basic potentialities of development. Through environment, he gets, in greater or lesser degree, his opportunity for development of those basic potentialities. This environmental contribution is far more than a merely negative affording of opportunity; it consists of stimulating influences from the social world of which the individual is a part—influences of various sorts, both as to direction and as to degree of intensity. The individual may be said to have a good heredity, if he by inherent nature is gifted with potentialities or capacities for worth-while achievement. An environment in the case of a given individual may be said to be good if it produces creditable results with the hereditary material with which the individual was furnished. Standards of success are bound to vary, but if I express my opinion to the effect that Mr. A is a successful man, I am at the same time saying that in my judgment Mr. A was endowed with good heredity and good environment—with good capacities and with social stimulation well suited to his particular sort of capacities.

Hereditary determinism is a doctrine not at all rarely met among university students. Many who would not subscribe to it as a general principle still have difficulty in ridding themselves of the notion that heredity is all powerful in certain striking cases that have come to their attention. Such individuals, if they think themselves to be interested in sociology, should read some of the contemporary biologists in order to help prepare themselves for the task of sociological analysis. Obviously, if the individual's destiny were entirely controlled by heredity, there would be no possibility whatever for a sociology, either rural or otherwise.

I shall quote at this place from but two of the more eminent of present-day biologists to aid in establishing the point that environmental conditions are always of great importance in determining just what shall come to expression of the hereditary potentialities available in each individual case. In the words of Professor Child:

Any particular individual represents only a small fraction of the hereditary possibilities of his protoplasm . . . As we have seen, the whole structure and functional pattern of the individual may be altered and controlled by environmental factors—in other words, by the education it receives during early development.[1]

Professor Herbert S. Jennings' conclusions are the same, as may be seen from the following statements:

The characters of the adult are no more present in the germ cells than is an automobile in the metallic ores out of which it is ultimately manufactured. To get the complete, normally acting organism, the proper materials are essential; but equally essential is it that they interact properly with each other and with other things. And the way they interact and what they produce depend on the conditions . . .

Characteristics are not inherited at all; what one inherits is certain material that under certain conditions will produce a particular characteristic; if those conditions are not supplied, some other characteristic is produced . . .

Every individual has many sets of "innate" or "hereditary" characters; the conditions under which he develops determine which set he shall bring forth.[2]

One may think of the individual, then, as being at any given time, the result of a combination of hereditary and social influences which he has worked together in the process of living to fashion his distinctive nature. At the same time, he is being met by new environmental material in the form of suggestions from which he will choose that which, in view of all the circumstances, seems to him most suitable. By this choice, something new has been added to his nature.

One may distinguish roughly between those individuals, upon the one hand, who seem to be forever on the move mentally, who find in their environment a constant succession of new and pleasing ideas which they are able to make a part of their developing selves, and those, on the other hand, who are doing nothing of the sort. The relatively static lives of this latter group of people are the products of very different combinations of influences from those which operated with the former group. With certain of the latter, poor germ plasm must be held mainly accountable for the failure to experience stimulating mental activity. One's hereditary outfit may be of such low grade as to render the possessor almost insensitive to ideas, however forcefully they may be projected. Others are in a mental rut, apparently because of unfortunate conditions of one sort or another in early life which built up an attitude of resistance to the new. Still others, whatever their innate capacity or early experiences,

[1] Addams, Jane, C. J. Herrick, A. L. Jacoby, *et al.*, *The Child, the Clinic and the Court*, New Republic, Inc., New York, 1925.

[2] Jennings, H. S., "Heredity and Environment," *Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 19, pp. 225–238, 1924.

are doomed to live cramped lives because of a lack of stimulating suggestions in their environment. The remark is frequently made that a man may make his own environment. It is unquestionably a fact that men are constantly doing this very thing—making and remaking the private mental worlds within which they live. A further fact, however, cannot be too strongly emphasized: they must form their environments out of material which they find at hand. Our social system is of such a sort that some individuals find at hand much better material with which to work than that which falls to the lot of others.

The Will.—This brings us to the consideration of the will. Each individual is given the power of choice. As he has no life, however, apart from society, his choices are limited to the social material to which he has access. He cannot free himself, upon the one hand, from his own individual nature which has been developing all through the years that he has lived, nor, upon the other hand, from the conditions of life within which he finds himself at the time of choice. The expression "free will" has an attraction for many of us. It is inspiriting to anyone to live with a sense of freedom. As one views life in the process of being lived, it is, however, apparent that some men are more free than others. Freedom of will, if one chooses to call it that, is a matter of gradation. Any given individual is *more* or *less* free.

By way of illustrating the principle that freedom is relative rather than absolute, let us imagine two sons of farmers, both of whom are strongly inclined, let us say, to the study of medicine. Let us imagine, also, that both are by nature well fitted for success in that profession. A's parents desire above everything else that their children may choose careers for themselves and properly prepare themselves to become successful and happy in their chosen vocations. A, from early childhood, has been constantly aware of this attitude upon the part of his parents. While he has had a part to play in carrying on the family occupation, work has never been allowed to interfere with his education. Imagine, too, that he has been fortunate enough to attend an excellent school and that, upon his graduation, his parents provide him with financial aid to start him on the long and expensive medical course at the state university.

Imagine that before B was even born, his parents had decided that their oldest son should remain in the parental occupation. From childhood, he has had to work so much on the farm that, although he is naturally a good student, he has earned poor grades and fails entirely of graduation. All through his school years he has been obliged to face not only the hard physical work of the farm but also a decided lack of sympathy with education on the part of his parents. Imagine, too, that his father has deliberately kept him, as far as he was able, out of contact with the city, for fear that he would develop discontent with farm life.

In consequence, at the age of eighteen he is ill at ease when in the presence of "city folks." Still, in spite of everything, he would like to study medicine. He is of an age to choose. We may say, if we will, that he is free to choose medicine. He is far less free, however, to make that choice than is A. To be sure, boys in similar situations have broken home ties and have fought their way to success in fields of their own choosing. Those, however, have been more free who were better provided with opportunity for development.

Should B chance to be of a nature, not at all uncommon, of which the most striking characteristic is loyalty to parents, as conceived by the parents themselves, he would be utterly unfree to make the choice of a career in opposition to their wishes, in which case the notion of studying medicine would be for him but a vague dream, which hardly even appears in the field of choice.

Primary Groups.—The individual is never independent of society. He is forever inextricably tied in with the whole world of individuals. In an especial way, however, he is bound to one, or possibly two or three small intimate groups to which Cooley has applied the term "primary groups." There is no question in the individual's mind but that he *belongs* in a very real sense to his family and possibly to his neighborhood and, as a child, to a play group. His dependence upon the larger society may hardly occur to him unless he is given to the habit of reflection, and even then it may seem to him but a shadowy relationship. The members of his primary groups are his people. Those not in his intimate groups may be to him simply "outsiders."

The especially significant fact about the primary group relationship is that the individual's mind, or real self, tends to take on a certain stamp, characteristic of the group of which he is a member. The attitudes of the child are very likely to be shaped into conformity with those of his family. He is reasonably certain to take over the family scale of values and make them his own, and this is especially apt to be the case if the neighborhood ideals are like those of the family. The child is dependent upon his social environment for suggestions. His most real and possibly his only vital environment is made up of his intimate group associates. Within this environment he may live through his peculiarly formative period as though within a charmed circle, absolutely untouched by suggestions from the world of outsiders. Had B of the preceding paragraph chanced to have been born in a community in which all of the families held the same ideals as those of his parents, the probability is that he would never have even dreamed of college and the study of medicine, irrespective of whatever natural capacity he may have had for scholarship and a professional career.

Communication.—The individual is dependent upon the mechanism of communication for the very existence of his mental self. As long as he

lives mentally, he lives in a stream of communicated ideas. In a primitive society, as well as in the more completely isolated regions of the modern world, the ideas which reach him are but the oft-repeated ideas which associates may pass on to him by word of mouth. In modern society, the avenues of communication are many and, because of the swiftness with which ideas may be carried to him from the most distant regions, the individual may live in a most stimulating thought world. The individual is able to use only the mental material which floats to him, as it were, on the stream of communication. Of this he may take what he will. The modern man's supreme advantage over his primitive ancestor is that the stream of communication to which he has access bears on its current a much greater variety from which he may select; and the primitive ancestor with whom man may compare himself need not be a painted savage of long ago. Life moves with such rapidity in these modern days that one need go no further back in time than to the youth of his own father to find the principle well illustrated.

There is a double possibility of individuals in our own day being so completely isolated from the influence of modern communication that their lives are essentially those of primitives. In the first place, they may live out of touch with the physical avenues of modern communication. For many individuals in the America of the present day, the daily mail, the automobile, the motion picture, the radio, the public library, the modern school are virtually nonexistent. The highlanders of Kentucky and Tennessee furnish possibly the most spectacular example of the lack of all such means of communication, and these people have been very aptly referred to as "our contemporary ancestors." Of hereditary stock as good as any in the land, they live extremely backward lives because physically isolated from the rest of society.

The second line of defense, if one may call it that, against the impact of modern life is mental rather than physical. Many individuals who either are or easily may be well supplied with the physical agencies of modern communication are actually existing in a condition of very real isolation, as far as contact with modern ideas is concerned. It is the intimate group, as has been indicated above, to which the individual tends to look for guidance in his thinking. Group leaders give the communicated ideas meaning to those who are under their sway. The father in the home, the "wise man" in the neighborhood, the minister in the church, for those who are willing to accept his leadership, the teacher in the school, if he does not chance, as is sometimes the case, to be an "outsider"—these men and women sift and sort and interpret and thus build up attitudes in their groups toward the new material which is constantly floating into view on the stream of communication, and which must be dealt with in some fashion. If a religious sect teaches that all recent inventions and modern notions are "the work of the Devil,"

then zealous adherents will scrupulously endeavor to keep themselves insulated from all such innovations. If the leaders in a rural community agree that "God made the country" but that He had little or nothing to do with the development of the modern town, then those who follow these leaders are likely to build up a shell of isolation to protect themselves against the multiplicity of confusing suggestions which for the most part has its sources in the city.

The relatively simple life, led by those who, through isolation of one sort or another, are relieved from the strain of modern living, is by no means entirely to be deplored. Where life moves the fastest are found both the greatest successes and the greatest failures. Some men and women are able to organize efficiently the confusing onrush of suggestions which is to be faced in the greater centers of population where the stream of communication flows with least hindrance. These are strong men and women, entitled to all of the distinction which their successes bring them. The failure of the weaklings in these same centers is just as spectacular. Many who would have lived normal, wholesome, law-abiding lives, had they been shielded from the intensity of competition in the modern urban setting, fail dismally in life's struggle. It is these who largely make up the numbers of the urban insane and criminal and poverty-stricken.

The rural portion of our population contributes to the national life its proportionate share neither of distinguished leaders nor of notorious failures. Those who, themselves, glory in being at the heart of the fray are likely to be somewhat contemptuous of the sheltered existence that is led by the relatively isolated. Those of a different temperament are as likely to emphasize the truth that the simple life is the safe life. The social theorist may reflect that the world would be much improved all around, if the toughest-fibered portion of the population could be located at those places in our social system where the strain is greatest, in the front-line trenches, as it were, and if, at the same time, peace and quiet could be provided for those who are by nature less rugged mentally.

Institutions.—Social life, from whatever angle it may be viewed, is seen to be characterized by organization. There are, of course, organizations of individuals. Mention has been made of the spontaneous, intimate groupings which are known as primary groups. There are also secondary groupings of individuals into clubs and associations of various sorts which are brought into existence to satisfy various specialized and possibly temporary human needs. Another sort of social organization is to be met in institutions.

An institution has been defined as "a definite and established phase of the public mind."[1] In other words, it is an organization of ideas and

[1] Cooley, C. H., *Social Organization*, p. 313, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1909.

sentiments rather than of people. The church, for example, is something more than an organization of the individuals who at any one time are included in its membership. It is made up of the ideas and sentiments that generations of men and women have contributed to its development. When an individual of the present day associates himself with a church for the purpose of gaining satisfaction for his religious needs, he is brought into relation with a certain organized mass of mental material that has been accumulating through the ages. If he becomes a "good" member of the church, he is thereafter profoundly influenced by this accumulation which is the church institution. To the extent that he has individuality and the inclination, he may himself make a contribution to the continuing organization of the institution. The weight of public opinion is so great, however, that the efforts of single individuals, even with such aid as they may secure, are seldom sufficient to bring radical changes to any institution of long-continued development.

The school, the family, the state, and modern industry are others of the many institutions owing their present form and nature not simply to the activities of men now living, but, as in the case of the church, to the contributed thought of individuals both living and dead who have concerned themselves with these various phases of life. Also, much that goes to characterize every institution cannot be attributed to the deliberate program of anybody but has simply developed as a sort of by-product of the processes of living.

From the standpoint of rural sociology, it would seem that the institution of the family-farm should occupy a place of central interest. It is an institution in the fullest sense of the term. An individual born into it, or coming to it from without, will find himself in contact with a well-organized accumulation of ideas and sentiment to which he must react. He may become a nonconformist in his relationship to it, as is the case with the individual's relationship to any institution. He cannot, however, remain unaffected by it, and he is sure to feel the pressure of public opinion exerted in the direction of conformity. Those born into the institution are likely to be merged so completely into it, because of the lack of competing ideas, that they give it their loyal support unquestioningly. In so far as the family-farm as an institution blocks the stream of communication, it would seem to sacrifice the individual.

As was indicated earlier in this opening chapter, students are likely to come to their study of rural sociology with a somewhat confused idea of what it is all about. Country life, agriculture, and the family-farm are apt for them, apparently, to mean pretty much the same thing. It is the main purpose of this book to present the institution of the family-farm as the very heart of our so-called "rural problem," and through its analysis to discover the sources and nature of the social maladjustments

which make us all conscious that there is a "problem," and, still further, to suggest, as far as it seems practicable, something in the way of programs for bringing about a better state of adjustment. It is not in the least intended, because of this special treatment of what seems to be the distinctive institution of rural life, to neglect consideration of the various other topics which usually have a place in textbooks of rural sociology.

CHAPTER II

NATURE OF THE FAMILY-FARM INSTITUTION

Family Solidarity

The most striking characteristic of family-farm life is without doubt the closely knit organization of the family. Two forces are responsible for the high degree of solidarity which exists. In the first place, there is the factor of physical isolation. Because there are fewer opportunities on the typical farm for contacts with the outside world than is the case elsewhere, the individual members must depend upon the remainder of the family group very largely for their social life. In the second place, the nature of the occupation is such that all members must spend a considerable part of their working hours together. The family-farm is truly a *family* undertaking. For its efficient handling as an industrial enterprise, every member of the family must make his individual contribution. There must be team work of each with the whole, and there must be centralized direction. This direction, so essential for the group as a working unit, tends not to be limited to the industrial phases of family life, but rather to cover every aspect of each individual's life more completely than is generally the case with other than farm families. The father, having the habit of domination, quite naturally does not discriminate at all nicely between the different phases of life of his family group. In other words, the farm father is the head of the family in a more real sense than are most fathers of the present day.

The institutional aspects of family solidarity should be noted. If there were no family-farm institution in existence with its binding traditions to be taken into account, much the same sort of unity would undoubtedly develop in the case of a family, let us say, from the city, setting out to run a farm successfully. The fact remains, however, that there *is* an institution, and there *are* traditions. The farmer's son who marries and takes over the management of a farm feels the pressure of group opinion urging him to be "master of his own house." There are traditions of subservience for the wife and the children. The institution fits each individual into his traditional place. The real subserviency, instead of being to the head of the family, is to the institution of which the family head is himself a product.

The organization of the family is traditionally a matter of status. The father is the head, because he is the father. If the mother, in any obvious way, runs the family, including her husband, as she is often well

fitted personally to do, it is a violation of the *mores*, or traditional customs. In such a case, the husband is apt to become an object of more or less good-natured ridicule.

Elsewhere than on the farms, family life in these days is generally much more loosely organized. Since the family is not the industrial unit, there is no opportunity for occupational solidarity. The husband works as an individual somewhere in the great scheme of things. If the wife works outside of the home, she, too, finds her place as an individual. If there are children at work, the same is true of them. Father, mother, and three children may be working in five different stores, or factories, or offices, located in as many different directions from the family residence. Since family occupational unity is entirely lacking, there is no pull from that direction toward any other sort of unity. Since each member of the family takes his occupational orders from a different boss, individual attitudes of independence toward the rest of the family are very likely to be highly developed. While an intense family loyalty may undeniably develop and persist under these conditions, it must spring from different sources from those operating on the typical family-farm.

Domination by the Old

Farm family solidarity is typically exhibited over a larger group than that made up simply of the parents and the children. The grandparents upon one side or the other are fairly certain to wield considerable influence in the determination of family policy.

When a son, or son-in-law, takes over the management of the farmstead, the change is apt to be more apparent than real. The relationship between the young man and his retiring father is likely for some time to continue much the same as it has been all along through the boy's early life. The possibilities of financial arrangement between father and son are many and varied. Whatever the nature of the arrangements made, the father is not likely to relinquish abruptly his real control over the enterprise. Habitual attitudes built up through years of close association are apt to continue until the older man has lost much of his middle-age vigor. This is especially apt to be the case unless the retiring father has developed interests other than those of the farm. This fact, in a most natural way, makes for a conservative attitude upon the part of the family-farm population.

Wherever in business and professional life the son gradually takes over the work of the father, it is not at all uncommon for the younger man to walk pretty much in the footsteps of the older. The father possibly has established the enterprise and feels strongly that its measure of success is due very definitely to the methods which he has worked out. The son, in turn, may be under the influence of traditional ideals. The fact that he is willing to go into business with the father instead of starting "on

his own" indicates something of a readiness to accept his father's leadership, which may amount to a very real domination. However, such domination remains within the business itself and the usual complete separation of home life from occupational life prevents anything like a far-reaching rule of the elders from developing elsewhere than on the farms.

Child Labor

As G. F. Warren remarks, "Children on farms practically always help with the work. There are many things that a small boy can do as well as a man."[1]

Much is said by both farmers and others of the benefits derived by those children who are obliged to spend their early years at work on farms. Undeniably, there are certain benefits which children receive from such a life. If the work be not overheavy nor the hours overlong, if occupations be carried on in the open air and under the direction of understanding parents, there is much to be said in its favor. No one would seriously contend, however, that benefit to the children is the chief motive, or even an important one, in bringing about the general condition of child labor on farms.

Children work on farms because farming is a *family* enterprise. The parents are forever faced by work to be done. Consequently, the birth of each child means the addition of one more potentially efficient member to the family labor force. In so far as there is a conscious motive which actuates farm parents in setting their children to work, it is, in general, for the sake of the labor to be derived, rather than for the sake of such benefits as the children may obtain from performing the labor. The parents are thinking in terms of an increased family income or of a reduction of their own burden of labor, or of some combination of the two.

Child labor on farms is profitable. "It is a cruel fact," as Dr. Elwood Mead, Professor of Rural Institutions of the University of California states it, "that on the average American farm today the only real profit from farming can be measured by the unrequited toil of the boy under fifteen."[2] The farmer and his wife desire to conduct their business at a profit. From the economic standpoint, they would indeed be foolish to neglect such a conventional source of profit as the labor of their young children.

Besides, there is the fact of the institution. More important than anything in the way of consciously evolved motives for the labor of children on individual farms are the unconscious motives which the

[1] Nourse, E. G. (Editor), *Agricultural Economics*, p. 360, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1916.

[2] Barnes, John K, "J. R. Howard, Leader of American Farmers," *World's Work*, Vol. 44, pp. 509–518, 1922.

parents have taken over along with the rest of the institution. Family-farm life means child labor—which is all that one really needs to say about it. The parents are products of the institution. They see life from the institutional point of view. When they look at the institution, they see child labor of themselves, of their parents, of their grandparents, and of their other relatives and friends, and now, in turn, of their own children, and their neighbors' children.

Rare, indeed, is the parent who would deliberately work an injury to his child for the sake of the institution. There do not exist, however, traditions compelling parents to examine closely into the effects or probable effects of labor upon the child concerned. Therefore the tasks assigned may easily be too heavy, and the hours required may be too long, or the work may be in other ways not well suited to the nature of the individual child. All institutions, by their very nature, tend to become more or less insensitive to the human needs of individuals involved. The cruelty of which Professor Mead speaks is not, in the main, that of the parents; it is rather an unplanned institutional cruelty.

Child labor, elsewhere than on family-farms, is admittedly one of the major social problems. It is a condition which goes along with poverty. Not every child of tender years at work in urban industry comes from a poverty-stricken home. The relationship between the two facts—child labor and poverty—is, however, so close that one is likely to imagine a poverty condition existing in conjunction with each case of child labor that comes to his attention. This is not at all the situation as regards child labor on the farms. There, children work because their parents are farmers, not because their parents are poor. Public opinion has accustomed itself to looking at the matter in this way. The same individuals—and there are many of them—who would see no justification for child labor in urban industry save the poverty of the parents, and who would feel that steps should be taken to do away with it even in such cases, see nothing but good to be derived from child labor on the farms. The reasons generally given are the benefits of fresh air and a wholesome contact with parents as a preparation for life. The *real* reason for the apparently contradictory attitude held is undoubtedly that industry can be pictured without the use of the labor of young children, whereas in the case of the family-farm no such picture can be formed.

Caste

Young people find their places in life either through the method of choice and competition, or through that of inheritance or caste. Formerly, the inheritance method prevailed almost without exception. Individuals rarely broke away from the family occupation and general station in life. Today, in America, the inheritance principle is very greatly

weakened. Individuals, as individuals, may aspire to whatever places seem attractive to them in our complex system and may throw themselves into the competitive struggle of attempting to win those coveted places. The educational system, too, is coming more and more to the aid of aspiring individuals. It serves the boy and the girl through vocational guidance in the attempt to ascertain what type of work is best suited to the individual nature of each. It serves still further by providing specialized courses of training to aid in preparing the individual for the place in life which it appears, on the basis of innate fitness and developed inclination, that he should occupy.

On the farms of America, however, caste is still the dominant principle. The family system depends for its normal working upon the readiness of one son in each family to continue on the home farm, and upon his ability to find a wife from among the daughters of other farmers. Both young people are prepared through a long period of apprenticeship to carry on the occupation; and the proper preparation is more than merely occupational. Young people so reared have developed a point of view that fits them easily into the traditions which go to constitute the family-farm institution.

Farm parents who have passed their prime, and must begin to take life more easily than when in mid-age, are quite likely to be keenly attached to the home farm. It may seem to have become almost a part of them. If a son and daughter-in-law stand ready to carry on the work, the older people, while gradually exerting themselves less and less with the heavy tasks of the enterprise, may throughout the remainder of their days maintain a real relationship with the farm. There is much in this relationship which is sheer sentiment. The aging farm people feel that they belong with this bit of land. An existence entirely apart from it is well-nigh unimaginable. It is not, however, entirely a matter of sentiment. The nature of farm work is such that old men as well as young boys may find in it their appropriate tasks; and in performing this work they are making a real contribution to the economic success of the enterprise.

The less that choice enters in, the more smoothly does the self-perpetuation of the family-farm system operate. Choice is reduced in scope and possibly eliminated through emphasis upon the single suggestion at the expense of all potentially competing ones. To a certain extent, this denial of real choice is brought about by the natural working of the institution, especially in regions of a relatively high degree of physical isolation; and, to a certain extent, it is due to the deliberate manipulation by parents and others of the thought material of the child.

A fairly high proportion of the men and women at the present time on the farms of America never seriously considered entering any other occupation. In other words, they did not choose. They simply pro-

ceeded step by step through their childhood apprenticeship until in the natural course of events they became adult farmers. They were never even conscious of institutional pressure. Another group—perhaps larger, perhaps smaller than the first—is made up of those who at one time or another really desired and possibly planned to enter some other occupation, but who remained on the farm because the force of circumstances seemed to prevent them from realizing other ambitions. A third group, undoubtedly much smaller than either of the others, is composed of those who could say that they had really chosen the occupation of farming rather than some other which they might have taken on equal terms.

Caste operates, also, in other occupational groups than that of farming. The children of the city poor have little chance to choose their way in life. This is one of the recognized handicaps of poverty. Farmers, however, as President Butterfield insists, are middle-class people. Therefore comparisons of them with lower-class urban people are unfair. Even in the case of the latter, public education is doing what it can to give the individual child his chance to choose.

At the other end of the scale in urban society, fathers are not at all rare who go to extreme lengths to induce their sons to follow in their occupational footsteps. Society is not greatly concerned, however, when a banker's son sets out against his father's wishes to become a poet, or a lawyer's son becomes an engineer. There is no large body of opinion opposed to such occupational shifts. When farmers' sons, however, in considerable numbers turn to occupations other than farming, there is a "drift to the city" to be explained and, as many would have it, to be checked, if possible. The family-farm system depends upon self-perpetuation for its normal functioning; and self-perpetuation cannot be maintained, it is undoubtedly true, without resort to the principle of caste.

Early Marriage

There seems to be general agreement that the rural marriage age is somewhat lower than the urban. If the comparison be made between the farming class, upon the one hand, and other middle-class people, upon the other, there can be no question but that the age at marriage of the former averages appreciably lower.

As Professor Groves remarks, "Among the young, the instinct of sex always has momentum enough to fill any social void."[1] In regions of relative isolation, the appeal of sex love finds less competition than elsewhere, and this leads inevitably to early marriage unless the latter be prevented by some sort of social inhibition. As a matter of fact,

[1] Groves, Ernest R., *The Rural Mind and Social Welfare*, p. 102, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1922.

family-farm young people live in a world which combines a maximum of isolation with a minimum of social inhibition regarding matrimony. The sex urge and institutional pressure work hand in hand to produce the result of early marriage.

As elsewhere in our analysis of the family-farm institution, so in the case of early marriage is found a tendency toward mere drifting upon the current of the institutional stream, with a lesser amount of conscious planning. The farm boy, living in a world dominated by the family ideal, naturally aspires to become the head of a family of his own. In his late teens, this desire is apt to become his most engrossing aspiration. The middle-class young man of the town lives in a very different world. All about him, he sees men struggling for individual success in an atmosphere of intense competition. If normally ambitious, he, too, wishes to join in that struggle and to begin to make for himself his individual success. For him, family must become of secondary importance. A wife and children would handicap him in his attempt to get ahead. He very likely thinks of family as a somewhat expensive luxury which he plans to get for himself when he can afford it. This attitude upon the part of urban young men means, for many, failure to marry and, in general, it means delayed marriage as compared with the situation on the farms.

The farm wife is no luxury. She pays her way from the very beginning. The young man understands this, and so do his parents. From the standpoint of the latter, the acquisition of a daughter-in-law, if she be well trained and of the "proper sort," means the addition of one more worker to the family labor force. Thus, neither the boy nor his parents can see reasons, from this point of view, for delaying marriage beyond the age which is customary in their community.

Then, again, the parents are likely to view marriage as a stabilizing force. If they desire the son to stay on the farm, and he shows signs of restlessness which they have reason to fear may carry him away to the city, to encourage his early marriage is excellent strategy on their part. "With a wife on his hands he will be much less likely to pick up and leave."

If the farm girl is "boy crazy," as she quite naturally may be, living in a world where there are few competing suggestions, she is likely to accept the first offer of marriage she receives, unless it meets with parental opposition. This first offer is very likely to come from the son of a neighboring farmer who is bent on early marriage. If she looks upon early marriage as desirable but is of a somewhat discriminating nature, she may spurn the sons of neighboring farmers, in the hope that she may be able to attract the favorable attention of "some nice town young man." Unless she and her parents, however, are willing that the thought of marriage should be put into the background and that she should enter

upon a process of personal development through education and training, and through individual adjustment to urban life—unless, in other words, she can actually make herself a member of middle-class urban society, through becoming a teacher, or a nurse, or a business woman—she is not likely to marry into the urban middle class. Early marriages of farmers' daughters are pretty sure to be with farmers' sons or else into the hand-laboring class of the towns. Because of a traditional suspicion of the cities, combined with a traditional feeling that "good" marriages are property marriages, preferably with the property in farm land, the parents—at least the father—are fairly certain to favor the former course.

An obstacle to the early marriage of farm girls frequently arises in the fact that this means the loss of their labor to their parents. The transfer of a daughter from the home of her parents to that of her husband means, among other things, the transfer of labor force from one family to the other. Many cases of delayed marriage, even of entire failure to marry, are due to the reluctance of farm parents to do without the help of their daughters. In such cases it is the institution rather more than selfish parents that should be held accountable.

Farm boys who desire to marry young are not kept from doing so by the lack of available young women in the farm community. They may find wives in the towns in which, generally, the female sex outnumbers the male. Many girls from the lower classes who expect in any case to spend their lives at manual labor, and who are thinking in terms of early marriage, are glad to become wives of farmers. Many, too, whose social status is still higher in the urban scale are not averse to marrying farmers, provided the men in question are personally somewhat attractive, and the farm homes to which they would go are in various respects rather better than the average. In the case of the latter, however, the marriage age usually would be higher than is generally the case with farm marriages.

The qualifications for marriage traditionally stressed among farming people are such as are readily manifest in very early life. Aside from the prospect of what is considered a good inheritance of land, it is primarily the physical that counts—physical energy and endurance and, to a lesser extent, beauty or "good looks." With such standards to guide them, it is to be expected that country young people will indulge in youthful love making, fastening their thoughts so largely upon the business of finding a suitable mate as to leave little room for personal development.

Young people of the corresponding class in the towns cannot afford to take their relations with the opposite sex so seriously. Individual boys are encouraged to divide their attention among several girls in order that they may avoid falling in love too early with some one girl; and the same thing is true of girls, very likely to a smaller extent. The expression "playing around" which is so commonly used in the towns to describe one's association with the other sex goes far to indicate the subordinate

place which is taken by the love interest. First of all, at least for the men, must come individual advancement, with which serious love making would be likely to interfere sadly. For the women, it is coming more and more to mean the same thing. Those women, however, who are disinclined to go on with serious personal development through education, and possibly through experience in some vocation, at any rate must wait for marriage until some man has succeeded in elevating himself to such a position in life that it is apparent both to him and to her that he will be able to support her creditably. This means that the economic pressure upon middle-class urban young people tends to delay marriage, whereas, quite in contrast to this, in rural life it tends to bring about early marriage.

High Birth Rate

The rural birth rate is considerably higher than the urban. If the immigrant laboring class of the cities with their very large families were omitted from the calculation, the difference would be still greater.

Early marriage, without doubt, is in part responsible for the large number of children born on farms. Also, the traditional importance of family in the country must lead farmer parents, especially the fathers, to desire several children. As prestige attaches to family headship, it may be felt that the larger the family, within certain limits, the greater the prestige. The urban middle-class bachelor is just as significant in his world as the married man; and the man who though married has no children loses nothing in social importance as compared with the father of children. Upon the other hand, a bachelor in the country is fit subject for humor—or pity, it being assumed that he couldn't get a wife—and a childless farmer, it is taken for granted, is not so from choice.

Then, again, there is the fact that children on the farms are not the expense that they are in the towns. Middle-class urban people are obliged to look upon children as a luxury. They very naturally take the attitude involved in the question, "Can we afford another child?" They must balance their desire for children against their desires for what they consider certain other good things in life; and they must keep in mind the situation as regards the economic and social struggle for success. Upon the other hand, the coming of children does not interfere with the traditional way of life on family farms.

The fact that child labor on the farm is considered a legitimate source of profit without doubt is responsible for the deliberate propagation of some children, from no other motive than that of profit. Dean Davenport mentions, as one of four groups of "rich" farmers, "men who have deliberately raised large families in order to have at hand an abundance of unpaid labor, brutalizing womanhood from no higher motive than

actuated thousands in raising soldiers for the Kaiser."[1] It is, of course, essential from the sociological point of view that subjects of the former Kaiser and ambitious American farmers, both, should be viewed as parts of a system, men of a group, rather than merely individuals possessed of what one might consider perverted ideals.

Industrial Work of the Wife

The banker's wife is the wife of a banker; likewise, the barber's wife is the wife of a barber. The farmer's wife, upon the other hand, is as truly a farmer as is her husband. The weight of the family occupation rests as surely upon her shoulders as upon his. In fact, as Taylor says,

> The woman's work while not so heavy, is just as irksome, and far more routine and uninspiring. Her work hours average longer than those of the man. She comes nearer working 7 days each week, and 365 days each year.[2]

Very likely, in proportion to her strength, the woman's work is actually heavier than that of the man. The hard work of the farm woman, along with the burden of bearing numerous children, and with insufficient rest periods at the time of their birth, in general brings about very naturally a condition of premature aging, as compared with the farm man.

The very opposite situation is to be met with in the corresponding class in the cities. There, the men, for the most part, earn the income for the support of wife and family. The women in most cases "keep house" and care for the children, with the aid of more or less hired labor. Gradually, more and more of the housekeeping burden is shifted to outside establishments, bakeries, food shops, laundries, clothing manufacturies, nursery schools, with the result that the husband shoulders the additional expense while the wife gets more free time. In the urban middle class, in most cases, the weight of life rests more heavily upon the man. Normally, one of his chief concerns is to preserve the youth of his wife, and life is so organized in his world that he is able to be increasingly successful in realizing that aim.

Not so on the farms. The wife has a larger house and more children to care for than has her cousin in town, and she must work with fewer conveniences and less help. The preservation of youth not being a traditional ideal on the farm, the household tasks are allowed to remain pretty largely right in the home instead of being shifted to outside agencies, even in the case of most of those families which could well afford to hire the baking and laundry work done outside the home.

[1] Davenport, Eugene, "Wanted: A National Policy in Agriculture," in *Readings in Rural Sociology*, by John Phelan, pp. 95–110, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1920.

[2] Taylor, Carl C., *Rural Sociology*, p. 66, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1926.

Then there are, in addition, the purely industrial tasks as distinguished from the usual work of the housewife. There are meals to be prepared for hired help, and heavy work clothes to be cleaned and kept in repair. There are milk utensils to be cared for and cleaned, and often there is butter to be made. There are the poultry and the garden. In many cases, milking the cows is the woman's task, as well as aiding in the care of other live stock. She may work with her husband in the field. She may help with the sale of produce in the market town.

It should be clearly understood that when the farm woman engages in work of the sort mentioned, she is not "helping her husband." The job of running the farm is hers as much as it is his. For both of them, increasing production is the great task. What special part each may carry is of comparatively small significance. Whether the woman spends a part of her time in the fields and orchards or confines her efforts to the house and its immediate environs may make little difference. In either case, the average farm wife puts in a very long day, and most of her effort goes into the industry. In the drive to make a success of the enterprise of agricultural production, all sorts of personal interests must be sacrificed, provided she has other interests than the purely vocational. The beautification of home and surroundings, the care and direction of children, her own individual development are traditionally subordinated to the program of getting ahead materially, through paying off the mortgage or, possibly, buying still more acres.

Close Relation of Home and Industry

Much that might be said in this section has at least been implied in the one immediately preceding. The farmer's home is on the farm. The house is as truly a part of the occupational equipment as is the barn. Dr. Galpin discusses the matter at some length, mentioning "the constant pressure of the business of farming upon the woman and child in the inner retreat of home life." Quoting him still further:

> Even though the farmhouse in its evolution has for the most part in America reached the state of total separation from the stables for beasts of burden and for cattle, the cellar of the house is still frequently a storage place for roots and potatoes, afterward to be taken to market; even the hog-scalding kettle may be installed under the house; the woodshed will contain farm utensils on shelves, or on the floor, or hung up on nails; calf-feeding pails, swill barrels, and feed boxes stand near the kitchen door; horse medicine and Paris green may have a shelf in the pantry; ropes, harness, robes, work boots stand about the kitchen stove, and a young calf, pig, or turkey may be brought in for a life saving.[1]

This is all in striking contrast to the situation as concerns the corresponding urban class. Because of the possibility in the towns of a

[1] Galpin, C. J., *Rural Life*, p. 16, Century Company, New York, 1918.

complete separation of the home from the business, the danger of a thoroughgoing vocationalization of the individual's point of view is greatly reduced. Going home, for the urban resident, should and may mean much of an escape from the occupational grind. Wife and children in the home may exert a humanizing influence and send him back to his work refreshed. It has been said that, if the man of the city were obliged to live with his family in the factory or the office, his case would be comparable in this respect to that of the farmer.

Low Degree of Specialization

The urban world is a world of specialization. In the very nature of things, the small-farm owner-manager-laborer cannot achieve a high degree of specialization in the processes of his occupation. "The American farmer is soilsman, horticulturalist, animal husbandman, dairyman, orchardist, teamster, engineer, marketer, economist."[1] Even in case he specializes quite narrowly as to type of product, limiting himself, for example, to the production of dairy articles or of fruit, his work still remains largely unspecialized as to processes. He must be a business man, a scientist, a mechanic, and a common laborer, all in one.

The fact that the farm is a *family* rather than an *individual* undertaking does in a certain proportion of cases make for a higher degree of industrial efficiency through specialization than could otherwise be attained. The various specialized tasks may be distributed among the members in a way to suit individual aptitudes and make for a much greater success than would be possible if the family members were all of the same type. In some cases, the mother or one of the sons may supply the business ingenuity lacking in the father. Perhaps a son may be the farm mechanic or an investigator in the field of the latest methods of performing certain processes. Farmers, however, have good traditional reasons for denying the children, and the wife as well, any real opportunity to make an original contribution to the undertaking. Even in those cases where the distribution of tasks is made in a really efficient way, the ideal arrangement is likely to be of temporary duration. The typical farmer is an ordinary individual, and he is faced by a most extraordinary task.

Primitive Nature of the Family-farm System

H. B. Hawthorne remarks that "agriculture is the last industry in a nation to rise out of the primitive stage."[2] One may possibly go further and state that the family-farm system is essentially a primitive system. Modernization is foreign to its very nature. Every one of the character-

[1] Galpin, *op. cit.*

[2] Hawthorne, H. B., *The Sociology of Rural Life*, p. 204, Century Company, New York, 1926.

istics thus far mentioned in this chapter is a characteristic of primitive life. Family solidarity, domination by the old, child labor, caste, early marriage, high birth rate, industrial work of the wife, close relation of home and industry, low degree of specialization—all these were to be found generally in society before the coming of the industrial revolution. With the development of modern urban society, since the coming of the factory and the machine, the individual has been progressively freed from the restraints of family life. The family undoubtedly plays as important a part in the lives of many individuals of the cities as it ever played in the lives of any of their ancestors. In those cases, however, its contribution is made through choice and leadership rather than through status and domination, as was the case in the past.

Individual farmers are occasionally to be met who are operating farms on which not a single one of the above-mentioned features is to be found. These men are nonconformists as far as the institution is concerned. They have broken with farm traditions, and they are financially able to indulge themselves in the luxury of living with their families a thoroughly modern life on the farm. Enough labor is hired to free wives and children from the necessity of working in the industry and to afford the farmers themselves opportunity for specialization as to processes of labor. Arrangements are made which bring about the separation of home and industry, the hired laborers being boarded elsewhere than in the family residence and the milk utensils, and so forth, being cared for in separate buildings and by hired help. A real opportunity is provided the children for choice of occupation and for education and vocational training.

Such conditions are to be found, but in the very nature of the situation they are exceptional. The great mass of farmers are bound by tradition and are faced by such a never-ending struggle to maintain themselves on the land that they must resort to all of the conventional practices of the family-farm system or fail in the struggle. The labor of wives and children is much cheaper and in certain other ways is more satisfactory than that of such men as might be hired; therefore wives and children must give themselves to the industry. In general, farmers would be forced to this way of looking at the matter, even were there no traditions lending their weight of approval to such a way of life.

If by some miraculous means all the men on farms should be suddenly freed from the traditional point of view and should at the same time be given the desire and the financial ability to live in the more modern way, as described in the paragraph immediately preceding, what would be the result?

Such a transformation would be from the *family* system now prevailing to an *individual* system which has never generally prevailed in agriculture. Individual men, and in some cases women, would be running

small farms, with the aid of hired labor exclusively, just as other individuals are running barber shops or grocery stores. Quite probably were this to become the situation, large-scale operation, with corporate ownership, would be enabled to take over the farming industry, just as it already has taken over every other major productive enterprise. The economies which generally characterize large-scale production would without doubt enable the mammoth organization to win in competition over the small business of the individual operator.

Reasons for Continuance of Family-farm System

Both on and off the farms live a host of men and women who gladly extol "country life" or "farm life" by which they mean the sort of life that goes traditionally with the family-farm institution. They are apt to speak of it as the "natural" life as compared with the "artificial" existence of the towns. They are very likely to look with abhorrence upon any prophecy that the factory system will eventually extend itself out over the countryside. Whatever the social values of the prevailing farm system—and there can be no doubt as to their reality—the system has not continued to prevail because of those values. The family-farm institution continues because big business in its search for profits has been unable to find them in agricultural production. However much one may lament the passing of the individual shoemaker and wagon maker, whose lives in many ways were not greatly unlike those of the present-day farmer, they were obliged to give way before the superior industrial efficiency of the factory, the machine, large-scale operation, and highly specialized labor.

In what essential respects does the small farm differ from the other small productive enterprises? Why has it been able to hold its own in the face of competition with modern industrial organization, while the other small enterprises have generally failed in so doing?

One of the more important factors is this: the small farmer may continue to live on his farm indefinitely and carry on his business without making a profit from the enterprise. The shoemaker, for example, upon the other hand, was obliged to make a profit or go out of business. He was under the necessity of selling the shoes which he had made for a high enough price to pay for the material which went into the shoes plus at least enough more to enable him to buy the bare necessities of life for himself and his family. The farmer labors under no such necessity. The raw material which enters into his finished product comes right from the farm itself, as does, also, a large share of the family living. If he realize only enough from the sale of his products to pay his taxes and to buy what little remains to be purchased to supply the family living necessities, he may continue on his farm. Most farmers are actually operating at a loss, which would be readily apparent to them, were they

to take into account interest on investment, depreciation charges, and wages at current rates. Undoubtedly, most farmers keep no books and think not at all in terms of profit and loss. If they care for the life on the farm sufficiently so that they would be willing to forego the possibility of a higher net income elsewhere in order to continue in that life or if they have a great dread of entering into the highly competitive existence of a modern urban occupation, as would be the case with many, it may be as well for their peace of mind that they do not keep a set of books to remind them of their losses.

Another very important element of difference between the farmer and the shoemaker, from the standpoint now being considered, is the fact that the former is able to use his whole family more advantageously to increase the output of his product than was generally the case with the latter. If the farmer's books are showing a profit, there is a fair likelihood that he is omitting to allow a sufficient wage, if any, to the unpaid labor of the members of his family. He may, of course, reason that, if he were to move to town and enter some urban pursuit, his wife and young children would then not be working to increase the size of the family pay check, therefore that whatever they may accomplish industrially on the farm is clear gain. In other words, his labor as a farmer is automatically augmented by that of wife and children, while as an urban laborer he would be obliged to stand alone.

The small farm wins in competition with the large-scale industrialized agricultural enterprise because the unpaid labor of women and children is far cheaper than the paid labor of men who would receive wages at the current rate and, too, because the small-farm owner operator is under no necessity of making a profit from the business, whereas industrial corporations cannot exist without profits. The family-farm institution wins by remaining just what it is, a *family* institution, with family economic solidarity and family traditions of attachment to the soil stronger than the individual ambitions of its members for personal advancement, either economic or otherwise.

To say this, however, is far different from speaking of agriculture, as is sometimes done, as if it were essentially a family enterprise. The reasons for its continuance to be such are mental rather than physical. They are to be found in the traditions which develop within the individuals of each oncoming generation certain points of view regarding life's scale of values, rather than in the essential nature of the processes of agricultural technique. Obviously, if the farm population of America would leave the occupation for something else rather than to continue living in the family-farm sort of way, agriculture would thenceforth be carried on by other methods. If life should become as highly individualized on the farms as it is with the corresponding class in the towns and, with this, if the profit motive should come to play as great a part in

the farm individual's outlook as it does in that of the individuals in other occupational groups, that type of industrial organization would become dominant in agricultural production which could find the greatest profit in it.

If the most efficient organization were unable to raise foodstuffs in America at a profit in competition with foreign producers, then quite certainly some form of national aid would be provided, analogous to that provided other industrial enterprises through the protective tariff. America will hardly be willing to become dependent upon foreign countries for the predominant part of her food supply. If those who are to raise the nation's food demand a profit for so doing, that demand must be met. The farmer's demands of the past and present, however, have carried little weight, for it has been perfectly well understood that profit is not a leading motive with farmers. While, in general, farmers may feel that they should be better rewarded for what they do, and at times they may feel this so keenly that they are led to resort to political action of one sort or another in the attempt to secure for themselves a higher income, there is relatively little power back of their agitation as long as the mass of farmers will in any case remain in the occupation and continue to carry to market the nation's food supply.

CHAPTER III

THE FAMILY-FARM IN AN URBAN SETTING—INFLUENCE UPON INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES

Whatever the future may be and whatever one may think that it should be as regards farm life and the occupation of agriculture, it is with the situation of the present that the rural sociologist must chiefly concern himself. It is his business to seek the facts of life on farms and to interpret those facts in terms of approved social theory. The gathering of statistics must play an important part in the process of fact collecting. Possibly a still larger part in this process, however, should be played through what Professor Cooley calls the method of "sympathetic introspection." It is important, for example, to have at hand the latest statistics regarding the number of farm families. It is at least fully as important to be able imaginatively to share the mental experiences of various types of individual members of farm families. The statistical way of approach unless it be vitalized through the imagination is bound to make for an impersonal and therefore an external sort of contact with any social situation. It is very easy to talk and write of "our farm population" and of "a drift to the city" and to think in terms of hundreds of thousands and of millions, which may be set over against other hundreds of thousands and other millions. It is more difficult to think sympathetically in terms of men and women and boys and girls who are living very real human lives, and this latter process is as much needed as the former by those who would have an understanding of the rural situation.

An Analysis of Two Case Histories

By way of illustrating the personal method of approach, portions of the case histories of certain farm families follow. There is nothing in the facts presented which is at all strikingly unusual. In each case a bit of farm life is being lived in partial contact with other than farming people.

Case History 1.—Around the beginning of the present century, a husband and wife, both of whom were children of farmer parents, owned and were living upon an average-sized farm in a Middle Western state. They had been married for several years, and they were without children. They finally decided to adopt a boy baby.

When the boy became old enough, he was given a gradually increasing share of farm duties to perform. Possibly his foster parents were more solicitous for his proper individual development than they would have been had he been their own child. At any rate, they were careful to see that his tasks were neither overheavy nor overlong. In addition to this they did what they could in the way of providing him with opportunities for personal development. They wanted him to have some of the things which they had lacked when young, and to have more than most of the neighbors' children were getting; and they were better able financially to provide him with these things than were some of the farm neighbors. They never seriously considered his becoming anything other than a farmer, apparently, and they desired him to become nothing else, but they did want him to become as accomplished personally as he was able in order that he might develop into a community leader.

They bought a piano and engaged a music teacher for the boy. The lessons continued for several years, the boy being much interested in music and becoming a fairly proficient pianist. He became interested, also, in the theory of music and in criticism, and he was allowed to subscribe to some of the more expensive musical journals.

The boy attended school in the near-by town and continued there until his graduation from high school, which was at that time quite unusual for farm boys of that community. He made a good record as a student, showing especial interest and ability in the field of English literature. He was allowed to buy many of the books that he wanted to own, and he chose largely from the classics, especially in poetry. He read and reread the great English poets, sometimes carrying with him, as he worked about the farm on Saturdays and during vacations, some small and well-marked volume, to which he would occasionally refer. At times he would carry with him a few sheets of paper and a pencil, and while the horses rested at the end of a row he would write down his reflections and the attempts at verse which came to him as he worked.

While in high school he went out for oratory, his foster parents gladly paying for private lessons. He became the school orator and successfully represented his school in the district contests.

After finishing high school, the boy began working with his father on the farm, though not entirely neglecting his music, his reading, and his attempts at writing. It was generally understood that the boy's formal education was over. He had done well in school. He was more accomplished in various ways than most of the other young men in the farming community. His real life work, however, was now beginning, as a farmer. He should soon marry one of the girls of the neighborhood. The foster parents began talking of moving to the village.

Near the close of the first year out of high school, however, something happened to the boy which made for at least a temporary change in the

family plans. At some meeting in the village, the boy met a professor from a college located in a not distant city. The latter saw in the young man rather unusual possibilities which he felt should be afforded an opportunity for further development. The boy for the first time became interested in college and began thinking of himself as a potential college man. He labored vigorously and long with his foster parents, finally gaining their consent to aid in paying his way through one year in college, at the end of which time it was agreed that he should return to the farm.

At the close of the boy's first year in college, he, after much persuasion, gained his parents' reluctant consent to his spending a second year away from the farm and at school. At the close of his sophomore year came what would be the climax in the story, were this family history presented in the form of a novel or a drama.

At first thought, one might say that the conflict, or clash of wills, which provides the climax for our story is between the son upon the one hand and the foster parents upon the other. The real situation, however, is not so simple. The chief conflict is within the boy's own mind. The parents' minds, too, share something of the same division, this being especially true of the mother.

The boy is about twenty-one years of age. He is of a sort to think seriously of his life work. Two alternative paths open before him. He may return to the farm, marry a farm girl, relieve his parents of the work on the land, affording them an opportunity to move to the nearby town. This is what his parents say that they expect of him, and he is keenly appreciative of all that they have done for him and feels a great obligation to fit himself into the scheme of things in just the way that the parents have been expecting and hoping since his early childhood. Also, he loves the country. Farm work does not appeal to him at all strongly but it is not greatly distasteful to him. He could do the work for the sake of the ready contact with nature which he enjoys, and still more for the sake of pleasing his parents to whose wishes he is so keenly sensitive; and it would be something of a relief to be able to settle himself into the traditional system of life with its well-marked grooves.

Upon the other hand, the young man realizes that through his parents' generosity he has been enabled to develop within himself certain tastes which cannot find any ready satisfaction in the social life of the home agricultural community. One of the things which he feels most keenly is the fact that the girl with whom he is falling in love at college would never be able to adjust herself at all well to the role of farmer's wife. She probably would never even attempt to make such an adjustment. While she may care greatly for him, she is thinking of him as a probable professional man or artist and not as a farmer. Even should she be willing to become a farmer's wife, he would never consent to her doing so. He is acquainted with several marriageable girls in the farm community, some

one of whom he might induce to become his wife. Not one of them, however, does he feel to be at all of his sort. Such a marriage would be one of convenience rather than of congeniality; hence to be viewed with distaste when compared with the possibilities of an ideal marriage relationship.

The young man has developed far in a world of highly competitive relations which seem to call out the best in him in the form of achievement in a field in which he, because of his combined heredity and training, feels himself able to win distinction. To turn his back upon the life which seems to be properly his own, in order to fit himself into the place in a system that was prepared for him when he was but a child, seems to him to be a very real mental suicide. Yet he loves his parents and they are thinking of him in terms of the system of which they are vitally a part.

The parents love the boy. They are proud of his achievements. But they cannot think at all happily of any successes that he might win in some distant city. It is the hope of the parents that they will be able to enjoy grandchildren in the way of immediate association. Family means much to them. Denied children of their own, they have paid heavily in various ways for the privilege of continuing the family line, at least along the social stream. They did not adopt a son simply that they might use him. They took him to make him a real member of a worthy family, and they gave unselfishly all that they could in order that he might become a more accomplished member of the family than any of their ancestors of whom they had knowledge. Their real world, however, is a small world, geographically and otherwise. For the boy to leave this small world would be, so they feel, to break the family line which they have been at such pains to establish. They cannot contemplate such a possible break without somewhat bitter feelings.

The boy asks the parents for financial aid for a third year in college. This they tell him they will not give. He then tells them that he stands ready to work to pay his way through school. All that he asks of them is that they attempt to share his outlook on life and his enthusiasm for the building of a successful career along the lines of his own choosing. This they refuse. They reply, in effect, "We have done much for you during the past twenty years. We have granted nearly all of your whims, some of which have been pretty expensive. It is now your turn to show the appreciation which you have often told us that you have felt. You know what we expect of you. Can you honestly say that we are asking too much?"

Then the boy made his choice. It is no part of my plan to tell which of the two paths he chose to follow. Such interest as the reader may feel in this bit of family history should concentrate itself upon the fact of the choice. The student of rural-urban relations may possibly, better

than in any other way, get a clear insight into the nature of the problem by putting himself imaginatively into the position of this or some similarly situated young person. One's sympathies should not be limited to the young person who is making the choice. He should make a real effort to see life from the point of view of the foster parents. He should walk clear around the problem, looking at it from all the various angles from which the various interested individuals would be bound to view it. He should ask himself not so much what attitude the parents and others *should* take of the matter, but rather what they *must* think of it because of the very fact that they are what they are. Life is lived by individuals and lived most vitally by them in a world of immediate small-group contacts. Those understand life the best who are able to share most completely the life experiences of various types of individuals.

Analysis of Case History 1.—The first thought which is likely to occur to one who is beginning to reflect upon the family situation just presented is that it is an exceptional case. It is exceptional in at least two respects. In the first place, the boy is an adopted son and, in the second place, he is apparently exceptionally gifted by heredity along certain lines. In spite, however, of these exceptions, the case is essentially typical.

It probably is true that childless farmer people are more likely to adopt children than are childless town dwellers. The higher value that farm people put upon family would seem to lead to that conclusion. The very fact that the boy of the above case was an adopted son, one may say, makes the essential situation stand out in bolder relief than would otherwise be possible. In this case, the family line was being continued through deliberation and choice, rather than through possibly a biological accident. The child was not simply taken for granted. There was a place for him in the family scheme of life, and he was secured to fill that place.

The fact that the adopted son showed tendencies apparently very much unlike those of his foster parents may lead one to think of the proverbial hen with her brood of ducklings. In other words, some readers will incline to a purely biological interpretation of the whole situation. They may reason as follows: Farmer people are unlike others by heredity. These people of the case history outlined above, desiring to perpetuate the farm-family line showed their ignorance of the facts of heredity by selecting a baby born in the city. The city-born child very likely had city-minded parents, thus he would very naturally take to the life of the city, just as the duckling takes to the water in spite of the consternation of the mother hen.

Such an explanation, however, would betray an ignorance of the facts of heredity as presented in Chap. I. The boy of the above case had capacities which evidently suited him for successful achievement in a

non-farm vocation. These capacities, however, would never have come to light but for the stimulating presence of a certain type of environmental influence. He also had inherent possibilities of becoming a contented and at least ordinarily successful farmer. Had he been provided with a certain sort of environment these latter possibilities would have been the only ones that either he or anyone else would have seen in him. Had the piano not been purchased or, after it had been bought, had there been no money for lessons or time for practice, his musical ability would never have come to light. Had he been kept so busy on the farm that his elementary school work was broken up and he lost all interest in books before finishing his preparation for high school, there would obviously have been for him no college. A class paper written by a former graduate student who came from a relatively prosperous agricultural community in southern Michigan contains the following paragraph:

> To turn to my own home community is to see the startling effects of child labor. Out of some thirty boys of my own age, only three of us had an educational outlook, due to the fact that the three of us were the only ones whose parents did not keep their children out of school to work. The taking-out process undermined interest, put the pupils behind in their work, killed desire to go on, and today the twenty-seven are comparatively ignorant, yet hard-working, farmers or are day laborers.

The boy of our case history was by nature a sturdy lad physically, well able to stand without harm much more heavy farm labor than he was ever called upon to perform. Had his mind been kept busy with the things of the farm, either through a following upon the part of the parents of the path of least resistance or through a deliberate program upon their part designed as far as possible to shut out all competing suggestions, he would never have become the subject of this case history. He would never have been called upon to make the choice above indicated. Both he and the foster parents would have been saved much mental struggle. The family-farm institution would have been running its normal course in this case without troublesome interference from the outside world. As will be shown in a succeeding chapter, the rural portion of the national population, and more especially the population of the farms, has fallen far short of contributing its proportionate share of distinguished individuals to the national life, and there is no evidence to indicate that this failure is due to deficient capacity upon the part of those born or reared upon farms. One needs look no further than to the influence of caste pressure, in its various manifestations, to find what would seem to be a sufficient reason for at least a large share of the farm-born shortage of distinguished individuals.

In the case now being considered, the foster parents, while thinking pretty exclusively in terms of farm life, were stressing quality rather than

quantity of farm living. Their small surplus might have been used to purchase more land or more equipment with which to bring about increased production. The labor of the son might have been used to such an extent for aiding in a program of increased production that, by the time he had arrived at manhood, possibly all he would have seen in life would have been a continued round of labor, production, surplus used for enlargement of the business, making necessary still more labor, resulting in still greater production. The parents must have been clearly aware of the possibilities of such a program. In general, the neighbors were following it. The parents, however, deliberately chose to sacrifice occupational expansion for educational opportunity for the son. The broadening education carried a high content of non-farm suggestions. The inevitable mental conflict ensued.

The parents provided a wide range of suggestions for the boy and then were unable to abide happily by the consequences which naturally followed their liberality. Some will argue that the childless farmers were entirely justified, if they cared to do so, in adopting a boy with the very definite purpose of making a farmer of him, but that having done so, they should have carefully surrounded him in childhood with such a set of influences that it could never occur to him that he might succeed in some other career. Others will say with Ross that "the parent who fastens unescapable bonds upon the child before it has reached the age of choice confiscates the child's personality."[1] These latter may feel that a personality should be guarded by every social means available against such confiscation.

In view of our present purpose the point to be stressed is simply this: the family-farm system thrives best in isolation. When ideas from the outside world make their way to family-farm individuals, they are very likely to develop within these individuals attitudes of unrest. Young people so affected are apt to conclude that they prefer to spend their lives as artists or musicians or teachers or milliners or barbers or bricklayers or factory hands, rather than as farmers. Older people whose lives are more completely wrapped up in the institution, and who because of their age are more impervious to the influence of new ideas, are likely to oppose the going of the young. The more keenly sensitive to parental wishes the young person chances to be, the greater the mental struggle he is likely to face when he comes to his time of choice.

Case History 2.—A man of about sixty years of age is living on the farm which he inherited, located about six miles distant from a fairly large city in one of the Middle Western states. This man has been more successful in a material way than most farmers. This success has been

[1] Ross, E. A., "Institutional Competition," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXV, pp. 171–184, September, 1919.

due to a combination of causes: good soil and nearness to market; and, on the part of the owner and of all members of the family, shrewd business sense, good health, and willingness to work long hours with few holidays, and the habit of economizing.

The farmhouse presents an attractive appearance to those who motor by, to or from the city. The buildings are thoroughly modern and are well painted. There are many beautiful trees. The dairy cows, of thoroughbred quality, add to the general attractiveness of the picture as they feed in the pasture lot.

The wife has been dead for some two or three years, her death being due it is said, to overheavy work, which was continued with too brief rest periods at the times of the birth of her four children. The three older children are married and have left the parental home. The youngest child, a son, is also married and is continuing with the father on the home farm. This sketch has to do especially with the young farm wife, and incidentally with her husband and his father.

The young man in question attended the city high school for a time but did not finish. It was felt that his labor could not be spared from the farm and, too, as long as it was clearly understood by all that he was destined to remain on the farm, no one could see any very good reason for his becoming a high-school graduate. He was in the city school long enough, however, to make several friends among the city young people of his own age. He had a most attractive personality, and he drove a good car.

After dropping out of school, the boy continued to associate with his city friends. He stayed up late enough at night to satisfy the city group and got up early enough in the morning to suit his father. This left him little time for sleep, but he was young and strong and showed no ill effects of this deprivation. At the age of twenty-two he married a girl of the city group and carried her away from her office job to become mistress of the splendid farm home.

From the standpoint of the young farmer and his father, the marriage seemed to be a success. True, the bride brought no property, nor any prospect of any, to the union. She was, however, a girl worth winning. She was of a much more attractive nature than were most of the farm girls of the community. She had graduated from the city high school, and with good grades. She was something of a musician. She had a most pleasant reading voice, and the old father enjoyed hearing some one read aloud the continued stories in the daily paper while he rested after the noon-day meal. She wore her clothes well. The old man liked to hear her described as his pretty new daughter-in-law from the city. She was a good cook. She was healthy, strong, alert, vigorous, able and willing to do what was expected in the way of physical labor in and about the house.

Also, from the point of view of the girl and her parents, it was a good match. She knew nothing by experience of farm life. She had heard it described as a hard life for women. She would not have considered going to just any farm. She had good reasons, however, for feeling that conditions on the special farm would be very much to her liking. First of all, the husband-to-be was more attractive personally than any of the other young men whom she might possibly have married. He had the use of a better car than any other of her acquaintances. He was the son of a well-to-do farmer. There would be no worrying over mortgages. The farm home was well furnished and much better provided with modern conveniences than were most farm homes. Then, again, it was so close to the city that the congenial relations with the city friends need not be broken. It would be a splendid place to entertain them all, and she could very quickly get to the city when she pleased for she could drive the car.

Immediately after the marriage came the beginning of a readjustment. This readjustment was much more than merely the reorganization of two lives united through marriage. It was the remolding of the city girl's life to fit the family-farm institution. The farm boy receded quickly and comfortably into the ways of life customary in the institution as he had known it. He gave less attention than before to his personal appearance, shaving much less frequently than before his marriage and very seldom dressing up in the evening or on Sunday. He now rarely went to the city save on business trips, which were usually taken early in the morning. He began to retire early in order to get a proper amount of sleep.

The young wife enthusiastically undertook to play her part in the system. If her part had been merely that of housekeeping, with its cooking, cleaning, and sewing, she would have been carrying a heavier physical burden than she had previously been called upon to carry. She found, however, that this was but a small part of her work. The industry made its demands upon her, both within and without the house. Milk utensils were to be cleaned and cared for; there were the garden and the poultry; and in the long fruit season there was work to be done in the berry patches and orchards. Mere housework was necessarily sacrificed before the demands of the industry.

The young wife soon learned several things, among which were the following: the actual head of the household was the old father who directed her labor and that of her husband as he did that of such hired helpers as were occasionally employed; there was neither money nor time to keep the house even as clean as she wished it to be, to say nothing of making it as prettily attractive as she had dreamed her home would be, when as a girl she had visited some of her older city friends; in spite of the long hours of heavy work that she was daily contributing to the

industry, she had no money of her own with which she might buy from the city stores the pretty things she had been accustomed to buy when she was a mere office girl with a weekly pay check; she was losing contact with the group of city friends because she was either too busy or too tired to go to see them often, also feeling that she was less well dressed than they—the same reasons keeping her from inviting them out to see her. She did not fancy the city friends seeing her in her untidy home. She was ashamed of its appearance as she was of her own and of that of her husband. Whether or not she realized it, she had begun the rapidly aging process that is so characteristic of the life of family-farm women. Heavy physical labor and mental isolation from the contact of congenial and stimulating friends were beginning to make their marks.

Analysis of Case History 2.—This case well illustrates the sharp contrast between two very different sorts of life being lived side by side in our country. Anything which serves to increase physical contacts between people, especially young people, of these two diverse types of life brings in its train interesting social problems of the processes of adjustment. In the case just cited, the marriage would never have taken place except for the automobile which carried the farm boy to town expeditiously and immaculately.

The young woman in question, being no sociologist, very likely did not think at all in terms of institutions. She possibly thought her husband's father simply a meddlesome old man who should be "minding his own business," allowing his son and wife to work out their life without interference. At the time of her marriage, she was a woman in the twenties who had come so far in life with little experience in the way of elderly domination. She might have continued indefinitely as an urban business woman, making her individual way in the complex scheme of city life. Or she might very likely have married a city man of the lower middle class and worked out her life program in conjunction with her husband, with very little interference from any other source. She has, however, thrown in her lot with the family-farm institution, and the old man, a very personification of the institution, has given her welcome. He is, in effect, saying to her, "You have chosen the life of a farmer's wife. I am here to show you how to make a creditable record in the life that you have chosen. I shall keep alive for you the family traditions. I shall constantly remind you of the sort of work that must be done and of the economizing that typically goes with this life. You are not used to it all as are the girls who have been reared within the institution, but you will learn and, having learned, you will come to realize that this sort of life has its rewards."

If the old father were living in the city instead of in the same house with his son and daughter-in-law, the situation would not be so greatly altered as might at first thought be supposed. In any case, the father's

life is completely wrapped up in that farm, and his greatest hope is that the young people will succeed in carrying on the family undertaking. He knows very definitely what he considers to be the nature of success as related to that enterprise and he would spare no effort to inculcate his point of view into the minds of those who are coming after him.

If the old man were to die soon, at least three possibilities for the future would present themselves. In the first place, life might go on much as before, albeit with the hardness somewhat softened. A little more leisure might be made possible, and a little more money might be spent for luxuries. In the second place, the young people might quickly spend the savings in extravagant ways of living and lose the farm by the mortgage route. Finally, they might leave the farm, either renting or selling, and establish themselves in some occupation that would afford the wife an opportunity to live a sort of life more nearly in line with her early preparation. If the father lives, however, for another 20 years or so, as he is likely to do, the chances are that by the time of his death the young people, by that time in middle age, will have become so habituated to his way of life that for them there will be slight probability of anything in the way of a marked change occurring; and, from the standpoint of the family-farm system, little in the way of fundamental change is desirable or even possible. The old man represents the system at somewhere near its best.

The young man has something of a double allegiance. He loves his wife, and he must suffer some pain at the thought of her personal deprivations. He cares, too, for the farm, at least through his personal relationship to his father. If the father were removed, whether or not the hold of the farm would be strong enough to keep him in the occupation at the sacrifice of his wife's health and strength, to say nothing of the healthy development of her mental life, may be questioned.

The wife has no love for the farm and has been known to remark that she would never have agreed to enter upon the life had she known what it would mean. She does, however, love her husband, and having put her hand to the plow she will not turn back alone.

The family-farm system, by its very nature, is likely to make for the sacrifice of the individualities of the men and women concerned. Those individuals who come to it from without are, obviously, the ones most likely to be conscious of the limiting nature of the institution and, because of this consciousness, to rebel. Some interesting questions for research, in this connection, would be the relation of the automobile to the sort of marriages made by farm young people, also the relation of mixed marriages, of the sort described in this case history, to family continuity in the occupation.

Quotations from Student Papers

Without doubt, papers written by college and university students descriptive of their own rural experience are one of the most reliable sources of information regarding life conditions on the farms. Serious students who have lived on farms, or who have taught in rural communities, have not simply a fund of information upon which to draw, but, being students, they are able to see the facts of their experience somewhat in relation to the rest of life. In this section are several brief quotations taken from papers written by students of rural sociology in the University of Michigan during the summer session of 1927. Each quotation is taken from a separate paper and is illustrative of one or more of the characteristics of the family-farm system which were mentioned in Chap. II.

A teacher:

A farmer's son, an only child, finished high school while I was in the home. He was an alert, promising young man of musical ability who played the piano well. He did not care for the farm—the family had moved there just four years before. The parental pressure was too great. Although he desired a business career, he stayed on the farm. The parents argued "If you'll stay here and help your father, you'll be just as far ahead. The farm will be yours someday." The old story! With no encouragement and no financial assistance to do otherwise, he stayed. It was not long before his mother died. The farm was sold, no doubt with a heavy mortgage. The son married a country girl, went back to the little village to live, and is now driving a truck in the summer and running a dray line in the winter, and certainly has lost a great deal of his pride in personal appearance, etc. I know some readers would say that, if it were in him to do better, he would have risen above the environmental influence, but I am thoroughly convinced for myself that it is easier said than done, and that when one is up against it, if he is at all conscientious he cannot just "pull stakes" and face the world.

A school principal:

We had a boy in our graduating class this year with exceptional talent. One was compelled to admire his ability. His parents own a small farm outside the town. They were very much interested in him and seemed to delight in his achievements, but they frowned upon the idea of his going on to school. They would let him work the farm. The other boys would be talking about what they were going to do, and he felt ashamed for he well knew that he was considered the best student, and others, including the teachers, were expecting much of him. Yet he was going to bow reluctantly to his parents' wishes, rather than to follow his own ambitions . . . I could never glorify country life again, even though it is the customary thing to do. "The barefoot boy" is one side, and child labor, another. Country folk get too much of the shaded warp, and not enough of the shining woof of life.

A school superintendent, after mentioning some of the joys of his boyhood days on the farm, says:

There is, however, a sad page to the history of our family farm. I look back with sad regret in thinking of the deprivations and hard, heavy work with its extremely long hours that helped to break down my mother prematurely. She died, a woman young and vigorous in intellect, but old and broken down physically. I am compelled to look back with a wounded soul to think that the family, myself included, were blind to the price that we were paying in the overwork of mother.

A school superintendent:

I dreaded the long summer vacations, not because it meant work, but because it meant that for days I would see no one but my father and mother. I eagerly looked forward to Sunday and the Sunday school where I should again see my friends and get away from the monotony of the farm for at least one day. Oh, those long weeks! I shudder when I think of them and resolve again that my two little boys shall be spared such dwarfing isolation.

A city teacher:

I realized what I missed in a social way by not living in town, although I attended all the high-school parties. Somehow, I seemed left out when the town girls talked of what they had done the night before . . . I was very slow and timid in making new contacts and of course took very little part in student affairs . . . It was difficult to talk to strangers and was much easier to avoid them . . . I still have a feeling of resentment for the opportunities missed when I was a child on a farm.

A school principal:

During my college career, my sister was married to a prosperous farmer, living within four miles of town (in northwestern Iowa). The farm is considered one of the best in the vicinity. I can't begin to relate how difficult it was for her to make the adjustment. She had been very successful as a teacher, and then to assume the role of a farmer's wife seemed utterly impossible. My mother frequently told me that many a tear was shed during the first year of their married life. The loneliness, monotony, and drudgery seemed at first unbearable. She loves her husband, and no one could ask for a better one—kind, considerate and generous, always providing all necessary conveniences for her. Some years ago, I visited the farm. They have a family of four children and seemed to be very happy. I was surprised, however, at the change which had come over my sister. She was a typical farm wife, not as particular in her dress and appearance as when I knew her at home. They have a fine automobile which she drives, her visits to town are rather frequent, but through it all I could not but wonder at her self-complacency.

A teacher:

When I finished the eighth grade of the country school, I wanted to go on to high school, but my parents did not want me to go, because I was needed on the

farm. I was quite insistent, but my father said that if I went I would have to walk back and forth each day; and the school was six miles away. I stayed at home. I stayed there until I was married at twenty, and then for four years more. I am away now from the farm, and hope to stay away. My only regret is that I did not get away sooner. I find that the long years spent there make the adjustments more difficult.

A teacher:

The rural children, as they appear in my classes in the third and fourth year of high school, are at a distinct disadvantage, as compared with the city children. Some of them are poorly dressed, by which is not meant that they are inadequately dressed, but rather that their clothing is in color, texture, and style not quite on a par with that worn by other children. The difference is often very slight, yet when we consider the natural timidity of the adolescent, their unusual sensitiveness, and their terror of being made conspicuous or ridiculous, it is not difficult to comprehend the influence of clothing . . . I have seen some children, particularly the girls, whose feeling seems to be little short of terror. The rural children are at a disadvantage as to preparation, also as to home conditions. They have poor background for the quality of work we expect of high-school students, and they have enough to do "after school" so that they cannot spend enough time on their home work. Children come to school after having milked a dozen cows, help bring the milk to town, and at least one family makes the children deliver the milk to a city route before they may go to school. After school there is more work waiting for them. I have seen these children fall asleep in class dozens of times.

A teacher:

Because of the lack of the "right kind" of dress, my first two years in high school were very unhappy. I developed the inferiority complex to such an extent that I disappeared at once when company appeared at our home. The intense mental suffering that such an attitude can produce is known only by those who have suffered thus. It was not because of unkindness, greediness, or lack of feeling on the part of our parents that we did not dress better, but rather the farm work took so much of their time and thought, and the isolation had made them forgetful of the conditions of outside life . . . After studying rural sociology I was rather surprised to note that the best dressed woman in our neighborhood, and the one who has the most time for leisure pursuits, is the thresher's wife, and they have almost the smallest farm in the community . . . One woman in the community recently exclaimed that if she had anything to do with it, her son would not be a farmer because "it's a dog's life." She had had a hired girl who had married a man in some Ohio town, and she found that this former maid was having more luxuries and more leisure time than she had.

The quotations of the above group have been presented for just what they are: some selected statements of a few university students who in recent years have had some sort of contact with family-farm life in America. The number might have been greatly increased by drawing from the class papers contributed in other years. The picture one gets

is not a pleasant one. It is not maintained that it is a well-rounded picture which has been presented. Farm life has its joys as does every other type of life. It is held, however, that the life in the family-unit scheme of living general on the farms is greatly at variance with that experienced in the individual-unit type of living which generally prevails elsewhere with people of the same relative social class. The association of these two diverse types of life is being rendered continuously more close by the constantly improving machinery of communication. The more close the contacts between those living the two types of life, the more keenly must be felt the differences that exist.

This chapter will have made its intended contribution if the reader gains from it a vivid realization of the existence of a most painful situation of maladjustment between farm life of the typical sort and other sorts of life of which farmers are becoming more and more keenly conscious. One who is sufficiently interested in the matter to study the situation for himself will find no difficulty in securing any amount of evidence of the sort presented in this chapter. All he needs to do is to gain the confidence of a number of fairly young middle-class non-farm people who experienced the family-farm sort of life in their childhood and get them to tell of their childhood experiences and mental reactions as related to their association with the outside world.

Attitudes of Adult Farmers

There are good reasons for thinking that the statements of adult farmers are of little value as evidence of the social situation of farming people. Publications such as *What Farm Women Think about Farm Life* (publications of the *American Country Life Association* and the *Farmer's Wife Magazine*), of which there have been several, tend to convey the impression to the superficial reader that the American farmer is a person to be envied. While certain hardships are mentioned in every such publication, these drawbacks seem to be trivial indeed when compared with the great enduring satisfaction and joy which in general are said to characterize the life of the farmer, his wife, and their children.

One weakness of such testimony as that presented in such publications as the one above referred to lies in the fact that only those statements are presented which suit the editor's purpose. Thousands of letters come to his desk; only a few are published. Then, again, the letters which come to the editor for consideration do not at all express an unselected section of farming opinion. It is reasonable to assume that, whenever a contest is announced or any sort of appeal is made through the columns of a farm publication for statements from the readers touching on their attitudes toward the life of the farm, comparatively few would respond. Those few who would take the time and the trouble to write letters to the editor would be very largely of two groups. Some

would make a serious attempt to win one of the prizes offered for the most satisfactory letters. These people could hardly be uninfluenced in their writing by their knowledge of the type of letter which would stand best chance of winning a prize. For the most part, this group would very likely be made up of sincere farm enthusiasts, though this would not necessarily be the case. Another group, perhaps somewhat larger, would write, not with a prize in mind, but through sheer joy in giving expression to their enthusiastic devotion to farm life as contrasted with life off the farms. It would not be expected that many of the dissatisfied would voice their dissatisfaction in letters to the editor of a farm publication. Thus the published statements of farm people regarding their satisfactions with the life they lead may be considered to be the residuum of a double process of selection and therefore to convey a highly inaccurate picture of farmer attitudes in general.

It is probable that, were all adult farmers and their wives in a representative agricultural section to reply to a questionnaire concerning the satisfactions of farm life, the majority opinion would be found to be highly favorable. Dissatisfaction with many matters, economic and otherwise, would be quite generally expressed, but the prevailing reaction would quite probably be that, in spite of unsatisfactory details, farm life is the best life.

The student of social psychology would hardly be content to accept the results of such a questionnaire at their face value. He would be interested in the reasons lying back of the replies given. He would find it impossible in many individual cases to uncover the real reasons for the answers made, but he would know that those individuals whose replies were favorable to the existing type of farm life might be classified into various groups.

One group, without doubt relatively small in numbers, would be made up of those who had experienced life elsewhere than on the farm, who had actually chosen farm life in preference to other possibilities, and who while living on the farm were able to make a satisfactory adjustment of themselves and their children to life in general.

A second group would consist of those who were very little conscious of any sort of life other than that which they were living. Since they had experienced no unsettling contacts, there would be for them no sense of maladjustment. For them to consider their attitude toward life on the farm would involve little more than a consideration of whether life in general is worth while.

A third group is the one which is very likely the most in evidence when letters or statements in other form are asked for to serve as evidence of the satisfactions to be found in farm living. The members of this group are very keenly conscious of the life of the cities. They tend, however, to see city and country as two opposing camps. They are

enlisted upon the side of the farm, to which they enthusiastically avow their allegiance. To them loyalty to the farm involves antagonism to the city. They derive an immense amount of satisfaction in their glorification of farm living and their depreciation of the life of the towns. Their thinking is dominated by a combat psychology, as truly as is that of the soldier in time of war or that of the undergraduate during the football season. Like these latter, they are emotionally prepared to see nothing but the best of their own life and nothing but the worst of that to which they are opposed.

Still another group is made up of those who are painfully conscious of certain limitations in their own mode of life as compared with the life of their relatives and other acquaintances who are engaged in some non-farm vocation. They adopt a defense mechanism. Deep down in their hearts, they have a yearning for the other type of life. They would change if they could, and many each year are moving to the city. Many who do not see their way clear to enter another occupation simply resign themselves to making the best of what they consider an undesirable situation. They would never admit in a questionnaire their dissatisfaction with farm life. It is their life, and to preserve their self-respect they quite naturally keep up an appearance of satisfaction with it. In many cases, members of this group are not at all sure of their own minds. They have grown so accustomed to telling themselves that they are pleased with what seems to them to be the inevitable that they may actually develop within themselves attitudes of satisfaction.

Whatever may be the sources of the attitudes of various sorts of individuals living on farms, the whole matter from the standpoint of the purpose of the present chapter is, as a matter of fact, irrelevant. The fact of the existence of a situation of serious maladjustment between family-farm life and other sorts of life may be established without determining whether or not a majority of farm people would admit such a situation. The situation may be considered analogous to that of the traffic-accident situation, for example, in certain of our large cities. The student of such matters could easily convince himself that an unreasonably large number of people were being killed or seriously injured in traffic accidents—in Detroit, let us say—in spite of the fact that the vast majority of Detroit residents have been directly unaffected by the situation and may be perhaps entirely unconscious of its seriousness. Such matters can hardly be decided by majority vote.

It is obviously the young who are most keenly conscious of the existence of two worlds of conflicting ideals and modes of living. While they are securing their education and thinking in terms of their developing vocational ambitions and of marriage and of where they wish to live—in short when they are attempting to square themselves away for adult life—they are likely to find themselves to be the victims of opposing loyalties

to such an extent that a satisfying adjustment is secured with the greatest difficulty, if at all.

If the world were a world of family-farms, the case would be entirely different. Or if the barriers of physical isolation between city and country could have remained indefinitely as complete as they were, say, fifty years ago, the situation would be entirely unlike that which is tending more and more to prevail. It is because rural and urban are after all but parts of the same civilization that it is possible for such pains of maladjustment as those indicated in this chapter to be experienced.

Relative Lack of Social Self-sufficiency among Farmers

Another significant fact is that the maladjustments created through the increasing contacts between the farm and the non-farm worlds are to a very large extent experienced only by the people of the farms. It is undoubtedly the case, as is often remarked, that farm life is more nearly self-sufficient than life in the cities in a material way because the farmer lives closer than anyone else to the sources of essential raw materials. The city is even more self-sufficient socially than is the farming community materially. The city person may live a fairly well-rounded and intensely satisfying sort of life undisturbed by the life of the farms of which he may be but vaguely conscious. The farm resident, if at all sensitive in a social way, cannot so completely disregard the city when it is brought close to him through the widening avenues of communication.

The outstanding individuals of contemporary America are living in the cities, and not alone those of the first rank but great numbers of attractive personalities of relatively minor significance are there as well. Specialized avenues of advancement lie before one in the urban environment made attractive by the influence of the many individuals who have successfully followed those roads to distinction. The ambitious boy or girl of urban birth may with relative ease make some sort of personal adjustment to the life about him. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the individual comes to adjust his ambitions to a life of only moderate achievement. In any case, he may make his own individual adjustment in accordance with the rules of a game which are quite generally understood and accepted. The farm-born individual, upon the other hand, is the product of a different sort of life to which he is likely to have attachments and loyalties which prevent his ready adjustment to the more highly individualized life of the towns. The idea of the city with its superior cultural advantages acting as a magnet drawing to itself hundreds of thousands of farm population annually is quite generally accepted. What in general is not so well recognized is the fact that many of these farm-city migrants are forced to experience

a most painful intellectual and emotional conflict in the process of cutting themselves away from the one world and uniting themselves to the other, if they in fact are ever able to do so. It may be that there is even less awareness of the fact that great numbers of the more sensitive individuals who remain on farms are perpetually torn between the two conflicting loyalties, unable to break with either world and unable to synthesize their conflicting desires into a harmoniously satisfying whole.

CHAPTER IV

THE FARM AND MEN OF EMINENCE

Certain Reasons for the Mistaken Belief That the Farms Have Produced More Than Their Share of Distinguished Individuals

There is an erroneous popular belief current to the effect that America's great men have come in preponderating proportions from the farms. Just how such a false notion ever gained the general acceptance which this idea has attained may possibly never be completely understood. A part of the explanation undoubtedly lies in the fact that America's population a century or so ago was almost entirely rural; thus the national leaders of the latter part of the nineteenth century, having been born some decades earlier, were naturally in a considerable majority of cases rural born. Writers and orators who have been interested in making a case for the farm have been easily impressed by the great *number* of rural-born men of distinction. They do not seem to have asked themselves whether or not, after all, the country was contributing more than its fair *proportion* of men of eminence, as compared with the city. Some of them at least have failed entirely to distinguish between rural community and farm, thus giving the farm credit for the success of many who were the sons of village business and professional men.

It is apparently the case that *political* distinction has caught the popular eye more than any other sort. Presidents and governors and senators are those who are by the average citizen ranked highest among America's great men, rather than poets, musicians, scientists, or engineers; and the politically eminent are possibly more largely farm-born than any other group. An interesting question, by the way, is this: how large an influence has the myth of the superiority of the farm-born been in securing the election of farm-born nominees for office who were running in opposition to equally well qualified city-born men?

A third element contributing to the mistaken notion is to be found in the fact that the spectacular rise of one man from a log cabin to the White House or to the presidency of a great railroad system or metropolitan bank has attracted more popular attention than the less spectacular process of the attainment of similarly high positions by scores of sons of urban business and professional families. These latter have made their way into places of prominence more quietly, more naturally, more as a matter of course, than have the sons of farmers. There has been

little news interest in their attainment of distinctive success, little publicity has been given it, because of its lack of obviously dramatic significance. Therefore it has not caught the attention of the mass of people who read the feature sections of Sunday papers and listen to lectures made popular by the inclusion of much of the dramatic.

However it is to be accounted for, the belief in the superiority of the farm-born has become such a fundamental element in the thought of our times that even some of our supposedly most competent leaders of thought have not hesitated to accept it as something unneedful of proof and through their utterances have given further currency to the idea. President Roosevelt has been quoted to the effect that the small farm tilled by its owner has shown itself to be the best developing ground for leaders of both country and city. Professor Giddings has said,

> Genius is rarely born in the city. The city owes the great discoveries and immortal creations to those who have lived with nature and with simple folk. The country produces the original ideas and forms the social mind.[1]

With men of such importance voicing these views, it is not surprising to find this remark in a class paper written by one of the better students arguing that art in this day is pretty much a product of urban conditions: "Of course, I know that the artists themselves were born in the country."

As an illustration of the uncritical use of statistics in support of the rural superiority theory, one may call attention to a statement by Prof. G. Walter Fiske. In a paper read before the American Sociological Society in 1916, Professor Fiske said,

> It seems to be undoubted that city people who were country born furnish fully their share of urban community leadership, the percentages suggested running from 50 to 90 per cent. In a casual reference just now to *Who's Who in America*, I notice that out of the first 100 names selected quite at random, 68 were born in the country.[1]

It may very possibly be the case that city people who were country-born furnish more than their share of the city's eminent individuals. The country-born who migrate to the cities may be a highly selected group. If, as is apparent, the latter part of the quotation is intended to convey the impression that the country-born are furnishing their share, or more than their share, of national leadership, the fallacious reasoning should be easily detected after a moment's thought. In 1860 and 1870, around which years must have occurred the birth dates of most of the individuals whose names appeared in *Who's Who in America* in 1916, the rural part of the national population was 84 and 79 per cent, respectively. At least 80 names out of Professor Fiske's 100, instead of 68, would need

[1] Fiske, G. W., "The Development of Rural Leadership," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, Vol. XI, pp. 54–70, 1916.

to have been those of country-born individuals to have indicated that the rural districts had been holding their own with the city in the production of eminence.

Careful statistical studies in France by Jacoby[1] and Odin,[2] in England by White,[3] and in America by Cattell,[4] Woods,[5] Nearing,[6] Davies,[7] and Visher[8] have served for those who are familiar with their studies to correct the impression that the rural districts have contributed more than their share of names to the lists of eminence. The rural-urban controversy did not cease, however, with the publication of the results of these studies. While there seemed no possibility of denying the validity of Dr. Woods's conclusions, based on a study of the names in *Who's Who in America*, beginning with the first five letters of the alphabet, that the cities have produced nearly twice their proportionate share, it was held by some that the more highly selected the list might be, the larger the proportions coming from the farms.

A paper entitled "The Country Boy" written by Dr. W. J. Spillman illustrates the contention of this latter group.[9] This paper provides statistics "for three classes of men who may be perhaps placed highest amongst the list of our leading men." The three classes alluded to are the presidents, governors, and cabinet officers. All of the presidents, the governors who were in office at the time the paper was written (1909), and the cabinet officers who were in office between 1869 and 1903 were considered. Of these men 88.2 per cent were found to have been rural-born. Contemplating this high per cent, the author remarks, "This seems to me to argue strongly for *farm* life as an educational force." (Italics mine.)

There are at least three objections to be raised to Dr. Spillman's figures, any one of which would rob them of the significance he attached to them. In the first place, if 88.2 per cent were rural-born, then 11.8 per cent were urban-born. As the most of the individuals considered were born earlier than 1860, some of them a great deal earlier than that

[1] Jacoby, Paul, *Études sur la sélection*, F. Alcan, Paris, 1904.

[2] Odin, Alfred, *Genèse des grands hommes*, H. Welter, Paris, 1895.

[3] White, R. C., "The City-Drift of Population in Relation to Social Efficiency," *Social Forces*, Vol. 2, pp. 17–23, 1923.

[4] Cattell, J. McKeen, "A Statistical Study of American Men of Science," *Science*, Vol. 24, pp. 658–665, 699–707, 732–742, 1906.

[5] Woods, F. A., "City Boys versus Country Boys," *Science*, Vol. 29, pp. 577–579, 1909.

[6] Nearing, Scott, "The Geographical Distribution of American Genius," *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. 85, p. 189, 1914.

[7] Davies, G. R., *Social Environment*, A. C. McClurg & Company, Chicago, 1917.

[8] Visher, Stephen S., "A Study of the Type of the Place of Birth and of the Occupation of Fathers of Subjects of Sketches in Who's Who in America," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXX, pp. 551–557, March, 1925.

[9] Spillman, W. J., "The Country Boy," *Science*, Vol. 30, p. 405, 1909.

date, they were born at a time when the urban proportion of the population was very low. In 1860, it was 16.1 per cent; in 1850, it was 12.4 per cent; in 1840, 9.5 per cent; in 1830, 6.7 per cent. It is thus not at all certain that the 11.8 per cent of urban-born is low enough to represent an inferior showing.

In the second place, while the rural places of birth include all villages and small towns of less than 8,000 population, as well as the open country, Dr. Spillman seems to use *rural* and *farm* as synonyms. It is well known that a large proportion of the rural-born among these political leaders were the sons of clergymen and other village professional and business men rather than of farmers.

Finally, it may be questioned whether or not these political leaders are in any fundamental sense, the nation's "leading men." Whatever may have been their abilities—and in certain cases they were undeniably considerable and varied—the one significant ability from the standpoint of their political distinction was their ability to get votes from a predominantly rural electorate. From the days of Andrew Jackson down to those of Herbert Hoover, nominating conventions have had good reason to feel that rural birth is an asset to a candidate.

Who's Who in America as a Source of Information

At the present time, the tendency has shifted from the attempt to prove that rural life in childhood is likely to get one's name into the lists of distinction in later years to an attempt to discredit the lists of distinguished individuals. Many writers who are interested in presenting as favorable a case as possible for the farm are insisting that the lists of eminent individuals are biased in favor of the city. Lundquist and Carver say, "As a matter of fact *Who's Who* is really an urban *Who's Who.*"[1] Sims says, "It is entirely possible that the lists of eminent men are compiled in a way to favor the city."[2] Hayes says, "*Who's Who* is an unsound base for judging rural leadership or comparing country with city in these respects."[3]

The writer's views regarding the matter are as follows: *Who's Who in America* is the most valuable source available for information concerning about 28,000 (fifteenth edition) of our more eminent people. The publishers are quite surely not concerned with the rural-urban distribution of the birth places or present homes of the individuals listed. They are interested rather in making the list as valuable as possible for the greatest number of people who may have occasion to consult it for infor-

[1] Lundquist, G. A., and T. N. Carver, *Principles of Rural Sociology*, p. 477, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1927.

[2] Sims, N. L., *Elements of Rural Sociology*, p. 110, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1928.

[3] Hayes, Augustus, *Rural Sociology*, p. 218, Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1929.

mation. Those names which are of interest to the greatest number of probable users of the book have the most reason to be included in the list. The bias is in favor of the eminent, and against those lacking in eminence, rather than in favor of the urban and against the rural. Very few farmers are listed in the book, also very few, if any, barbers, however efficient they may be, or managers of small retail stores. Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, both of whom happen to have been rural born, are very properly listed. The great army of electricians and automobile mechanics and salesmen, many of whom were urban born, are just as properly omitted from the list. Some sons and daughters of farmers go to the city and later become distinguished; the overwhelming majority of those who go to the city do not become distinguished. A very few who remain in their home communities also become famous in a large enough way to be included in the list; the great majority who remain do not.

Distinguished Americans are distinguished Americans wherever they were born, and whatever may be their work. Our poets and novelists and dramatists and composers, and scientists, including agricultural scientists, and scholars and statesmen and engineers, including agricultural engineers, and military leaders and captains of industry, including the agricultural industry, and pulpit orators belong to all of us. Rural and urban alike are, or should be, interested in these important people. The youth of today, whether living on farms or in the cities, should be afforded the opportunity to have for their heroes living men and women of distinction. In an ideal social order, the farm-born would be afforded equal opportunity with those of the cities to achieve for themselves places of eminence.

Small-scale achievement of good quality is assuredly worthy; larger-scale achievement of equally good quality is still more so. University presidents are eminent men. The men who sweep the floors and look after the heat and the lights are not eminent men. However well the latter may do their work, they are individually of considerably less significance than is the man in the president's chair. If one of these latter had it in him to be a more capable university president than is the man already at the head of the institution, it must be considered an unfortunate circumstance that conditions prevented his development.

The agricultural industry is as important as any in our national scheme of things. The individual owner-manager of a small farm, however, even though he be a master farmer, only most rarely has earned the right to a place among our 28,000 most eminent Americans. Ideally, the most eminent would also be the inherently most capable. Without doubt, many relatively unknown American farmers were sufficiently well endowed by heredity to have gained for themselves places of distinction in competition with those who at the present time do hold such places in our national life had the opportunities been but reasonably

favorable. A frank admission that because of unfavorable developmental conditions farmers' children have failed to occupy their proportionate share of space in the lists of the nationally eminent would seem to be called for, rather than a criticism of the lists for their failure to include individuals of minor distinction merely in order to give rural communities a larger representation.

Certain Studies of the Origins of Distinguished Individuals

Professor Stephen S. Visher has made a most important contribution to our understanding of this whole matter by a study published in 1925.[1] Instead of depending upon data furnished by *Who's Who in America,* Professor Visher secured from the individuals whose biographies appear in the twelfth edition of the book information upon two points not covered therein: the type of place of birth and the occupation of the father at time of birth. This information was secured from 18,356 individuals. The distribution of the total population of the country in 1870 was used as a basis of comparison, and through the process of comparison certain values were arrived at for the various types of places of birth and for the types of occupations of the fathers.

As to the type of birthplace, the following relative values were discovered:

Suburb of large city	10.9
Village (up to 8,000)	8.9
Small city (8,000 to 50,000)	6.1
Large city (50,000 and over)	5.6
Farm	1.0

As to the occupation of the father, the approximate values are as follows:

Clergyman	2,400
Professional man (other than clergyman)	1,035
Business man	600
Farmer	70
Laborer (skilled)	30
Laborer (unskilled)	1

Thus, according to the tables of values, in proportion to population, the city suburbs have been the birthplaces of about eleven times as many distinguished Americans as the farms; and clergymen have fathered two thousand four hundred times as many distinguished sons and daughters as have unskilled laborers, in proportion to numbers.

Professor Visher is content to do little more than to provide the statistics. Their significance in relation to the rural-urban controversy

[1] See footnote 8, p. 49

he does not consider; and this significance seems to be decidedly worth consideration.

By breaking up "rural communities" into city suburbs, country villages, and open country, Visher has really demonstrated that "rural," with the line drawn between rural and urban at 8,000, is not at all a homogeneous something to be set over against the city. As shown by the table of values, large and small cities have not differed greatly in productivity of eminent individuals. Types of rural communities have, upon the other hand, differed exceedingly. Villages and open country have had in common the fact of a certain degree of physical isolation from city life. Notwithstanding this common factor, however, the village has been about nine times as productive of distinguished individuals as the farm. Thus the rural deficiency discovered by earlier investigation has been entirely due to the farm, for the small towns, both country and suburban, have made much better records than have the cities.

A further most significant fact is revealed by a comparison of Visher's two tables of values. This is that the occupation of the father is much more important a determining factor than is the size of community in which one chances to be born. While the city suburb has about eleven times the value of the farm, the clergy as a group have over thirty-four times the relative value of the farming class. Evidently the farmer's son is not nearly so badly handicapped by being born outside a city as by being born the son of a farmer. Possibly the fact in itself of country birth and surroundings during childhood is no handicap at all, and it may be even an advantage.

While the large cities have in general been provided with better educational and cultural facilities—schools, churches, libraries, art museums, theaters—than the smaller places, the cities occupy but a median place in the scale of relative values. Their position in the scale must evidently be explained in terms of the relative numbers in them who are members of the business and professional classes, upon the one hand, and in the laboring classes, upon the other. Any increase of the proportionate number in the former classes would raise the relative value of the city from the standpoint of the production of individuals of eminence; and decrease of the proportionate numbers in these classes would correspondingly lower the relative value of the city.

The city suburbs make the best showing of all, but this does not mean that every child who chances to be born there is at an advantage. The suburbs are at the top of the list presumably because of the high proportion of business and professional families who reside there. A laborer's child born there would very likely be little, if any, better situated as regards any probability of future distinguished achievement than if he had been born in the city. The same is true of the children of business and professional men.

The writer's own study in this field was entered upon with the following three aims in view:[1]

1. To ascertain through an examination of all of the biographic sketches in the then latest edition of *Who's Who in America* what might be learned about the relative productivity of rural and urban populations.

2. To determine so far as possible, the *tendencies* as to rural-urban distribution of births of children who later become distinguished men and women. The question was whether the cities were becoming relatively more and more or less and less productive of such persons.

3. To classify the distinguished individuals listed in *Who's Who* into occupational groups and to study each group separately, with a view to discovering what significant differences there are among them.

The edition studied was the thirteenth (1924–1925). Of the total number of 25,357 biographies in the volume, 21,600 were of native-born Americans who furnished adequate data covering the desired points.

As the 8,000 division point between rural and urban is the only one which the Census Bureau has used for the whole period under consideration, it was the one necessarily used in this study. Each individual was classified as either rural or urban and was also credited to the census year nearest his date of birth.

Without reproducing here in detail the statistical material appearing in the article in the *Journal of Sociology*, a summary of the findings as related to the three above-mentioned aims is presented.

In the first place, the evidence is to the effect that the city has been relatively more productive than the country in the case of each of the census-year groups represented. The 1820, 1830, and 1900 groups are too small to be taken at all seriously in a statistical way. Considering the remaining six groups (1840–1890 inclusive) the cities appear to the best advantage in the case of the 1840 group, the urban population contributing nearly four times its proportionate share in that period to the list of surviving individuals sketched in *Who's Who*, the exact proportion being rural:urban as 1:3.90. The cities' lowest ratio was 2.25:1, in the case of the 1870 group, which, by the way, is by far the largest of any of the groups represented, somewhat more than a third of all of the individuals listed having been born in the ten-year period with July 1, 1870, its median date.

As regards the first aim of the study, the only result accomplished was to support the earlier findings of Woods and others. From at least three different angles, the findings may be criticized as being too favorable to the rural portion of the population.

1. Bearing in mind that those listed in any edition of *Who's Who* are simply those who are still alive at the time that the information for that

[1] Holmes, Roy H., "A Study in the Origins of Distinguished Living Americans," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 670–685, January, 1929.

edition is collected and accepting the general assumption that the country-born live longer on the average than the city-born, one logically assumes that at any time the proportion of the country-born in the older-age groups, who had in some previous year been admitted to the list and who would still be alive, would be larger than that of the city-born. In other words, if all of those born in the 1840 period who had ever been listed were considered, instead of merely those who were still surviving in 1924, averaging over eighty years of age at that time, the urban ratio for that group would be higher than 3.90:1.

It may be, however, that the sort of urban-born individuals who find their way into *Who's Who* live as long as those who were born in the country, and that the urban ratio would not be increased were total numbers, rather than simply survivors, considered.

2. The findings are much more surely defective from a second point of view. Had the comparison been made on the basis of relative birth rates rather than on that of relative total populations, the urban ratios would have been higher. The rural birth rate is considerably higher than the urban. In proportion to the total number of children born in city and country respectively, in the 1840 period, the city contributed considerably more than 3.90 times its share.

3. If the division between rural and urban could have been made at 2,500 rather than at 8,000, the urban showing would have been very much improved. Visher showed that the small towns of under 8,000 population have been much more productive of eminence than have been the cities of larger size. Therefore, if all towns, whatever their size, were considered as urban, the urban ratio would have been considerably raised.

The second aim of the study was to determine tendencies. It had sometimes been said that the cities were not merely more productive of distinction than the rural regions, but that they were becoming relatively more and more productive. This latter might quite possibly be shown to be the case were a study to be made based on a rural-urban division at 2,500. With the line, however, drawn at 8,000, the urban regions show decreasing productivity.

Table I indicates the rural-urban ratio for each of the six census-year groups.

TABLE I.—RATIO OF RURAL-BORN TO URBAN-BORN IN WHO'S WHO IN PROPORTION TO THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP IN THE TOTAL POPULATION

Census	Rural	Urban
1840	1	3.90
1850	1	3.02
1860	1	2.58
1870	1	2.25
1880	1	2.35
1890	1	2.44

From 1840 to 1870, a falling urban ratio is plainly evident. With the 1880 group, and still more in the case of that of 1890, the cities apparently were regaining something of their lost advantage. There is good reason, however, to believe that the rising urban ratio in the case of these last two groups is only apparent. The rural-born are older on the average when they achieve distinction than the urban-born, partly because they get through school somewhat later than the latter and more especially because they are likely to gain their eminence in fields in which recognition comes relatively late in life. It is quite probable that statistics based on the situation as it will exist twenty years from now would show the tendency of the earlier years continuing on through 1880 and 1890.

What the falling urban ratio may be interpreted to mean as regards the farm population is not at all clear. Professor Visher shows that the farming class has had a very low productivity as compared with the professional and business classes, but his statistics do not indicate tendencies. The author's study indicates *rural-urban* tendencies but tells nothing of the farming population as a separate group.

It may quite possibly be that the farming group has contributed very little to the improved relative showing made by the rural section as a whole. Bearing in mind Visher's table of values which indicates a very much higher productivity for the professional and business classes than for either farmers or laborers, one must conclude that shifts in the relative numbers of the former classes when compared to the latter must have much to do with the changing ratios. In the cities during the period under consideration the laboring classes increased in numbers much more rapidly than did the membership of the professional and business groups, while the opposite trend has been operative in the rural areas, where farmers formed a smaller and smaller proportion of the total rural population, due to the increase in numbers and size of small towns with their business and professional families.

Bettered means of communication, making for a more rapid and general dissemination of ideas, would be expected to contribute toward an equalization of opportunities for rural and urban areas and therefore toward an equalization of ratios of productivity of eminent individuals. The matter is very greatly complicated, however, by the existence of specialized family traditions. The son of a rural minister or doctor or merchant is generally much more free than is the son of a farmer to take advantage of such ideas leading toward personal advancement as the improved machinery of communication makes available. According to Visher's tables, the sons of city laborers, who live in fairly close physical proximity to the very best of urban cultural influences, rank considerably below the sons of farmers even in their representation in the lists of eminence.

Small college towns are very important sources of rural-born eminence. A considerable number of the families residing in each such town very definitely make their homes there in order to be able to gain for themselves the advantages, both direct and indirect, which the college has to offer. All through the period that we are considering, such rural college centers were increasing in number and size, and this development must be to no small extent responsible for the improved rural showing.

A very large proportion of rural-born individuals who later become eminent spend some part of their developmental years in the city. A most interesting table of statistics might be prepared showing just how many of the 13,699 rural-born individuals included in this study removed to the city or were taken there during each of the earliest years of life. How many got to the city during the first year of life, how many during the second year, how many during each of the following years including, say, the first twenty-one years of their lives? If, as is very probable, there has been an increasing tendency for families desiring to afford their children the best opportunities to remove to the city, this must be held in part accountable for the rising ratio of rural births of distinguished individuals.

The third aim of the study was to ascertain what differences there may be in the rural-urban distribution of the birthplaces of the members of various occupational groups. A somewhat extensive quotation from the article above referred to follows:

> The end sought in the matter of occupational grouping was a distribution into groups few enough in number to make for simplicity of treatment, yet small enough in size to make for a reasonably high degree of homogeneity in type of interests. A division into twelve groups was adopted, as follows: business, science, education, law, politics, church, medicine, art, journalism, army and navy, engineering, and agriculture.
>
> In certain cases, the distinctions made are somewhat arbitrary. For example, most individuals of the science group are also educators; and the greater proportion of the politically distinguished are also lawyers. The science group consists of those whose biographical sketches indicate some achievement of a productive sort in science or scholarship. The education group consists of educators whose distinction apparently rests upon achievement of an administrative or instructional nature. Librarians and social workers were placed either in the science or in the education group, depending upon whether or not they are apparently entitled to distinction for achievement in the field of productive scholarship.
>
> Lawyers whose biographical sketches indicate that they have held public office or have been active in the field of party politics were placed in the politics group; the remainder were placed in the law group. In the art group were placed those who have won distinction either as producers or as critics anywhere in the broad field of the fine arts. The journalism group consists of all writers whose writings apparently do not entitle them to classification in either the science or the art groups. Editors and publishers are also included here.

In certain cases, an individual might have been placed in two or more of the different occupational divisions. In such cases, the art classification was arbitrarily given precedence over all others, with politics second in this regard. Where possible, teachers were classified in their field of instruction instead of being placed in the education group. For example, a teacher of engineering would be classed in the engineering rather than in the education group. In every case, the biographical sketches were studied to determine the classification to be made; the occupational designations which individuals give themselves are lacking in exactness to such a degree that they cannot be relied upon.

Possibly the most significant fact indicated in Table II is that, the small agriculture group excepted, the cities have contributed more than their proportionate share to every occupational group.

TABLE II.[1]—RURAL-URBAN DISTRIBUTION OF THE BIRTHPLACES OF DISTINGUISHED AMERICANS GROUPED ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION

Occupation	Total	Rural	Urban	Percentage of urban
1. Art	2,168	884	1,284	59.22
2. Business	2,203	1,177	1,026	46.57
3. Journalism	1,629	907	722	44.32
4. Engineering	1,142	645	497	43.52
5. Law	1,048	607	441	42.08
6. Medicine	1,584	923	661	41.72
7. Science	3,817	2,594	1,223	32.04
8. Army and navy	537	372	165	30.72
9. Church	1,924	1,401	523	27.18
10. Politics	3,238	2,424	814	25.13
11. Education	2,183	1,650	533	24.41
12. Agriculture	127	115	12	9.44
Total	21,600	13,699	7,901	36.57

[1] Table V in original study.

The urban excess is least in the case of education, but even here 24.41 per cent were urban born, while as late as 1880 but 22.57 per cent of the population were in the cities. Art is in a class by itself from the standpoint of urban birth, being nearly 13 per cent higher in the list than business with its 46.57 per cent of city-born.

From the standpoint of rural-urban distribution, the twelve occupational groups divide very definitely into two divisions of six each, medicine and science (sixth and seventh in the list) being separated from each other in the scale by nearly 10 per cent. Such a marked division of the groups must rest upon a somewhat corresponding separation between the factors in rural and urban life which make for distinguished success in the various occupations. The country-born furnish much higher proportions of the six groups lowest in the list than of the others. Without doubt, the greater simplicity of the rural environment is in large part responsible for this fact. Lacking the numerous suggestions of the city-born, the country boy has at least the teacher, the minister, and the local

politician to turn to as models. Then, too, distinguished careers in the fields represented by these men may have, and quite frequently do have, most modest beginnings. The farm boy of good capacity and strong ambition, although lacking money and influence, may gradually make his way to success in one of these familiar fields.

Quite likely, most boys, both rural and urban, at some time fancy themselves becoming officers of the army and navy. In general, such ambitions would find less competition in the mind of the farm boy than in that of his urban cousin. Then, too, as appointment to Annapolis and West Point is by Congressional districts and, as there are many rural districts, the rural portion of the population is bound to be well represented among the graduates of these schools.

As to the politically distinguished, the same factors make for a large rural representation. The rural portions of the population are naturally very generally served politically by rural-born officials, who, if of a certain rank, are arbitrarily given places in *Who's Who in America.* Then, too, the undoubted popular impression that in some way country birth is an asset has certainly contributed to the political success of many farm-born individuals in competition with men from the city.

The lone position of the art group at the head of the list, from the standpoint of urban birth, is sufficiently striking to call for a separate inquiry as to probable causes. This is the more true because of what probably is the popular belief that artists in general owe much to rural life for their inspiration. Almost invariably when I have asked students to arrange the twelve groups in what they would think to be the correct order, from the standpoint of urban birth, "business" has been placed at the head of the list, with "art" appearing several points below. Assuredly the city is the place of business—"hard," "impersonal," "materialistic"—while the country, with its wide open spaces, its "lowing kine," and "rippling brooks," is the realm of poetry and of song.

It may very well be, when one stops to think of it, that the city youth is in a better position to appreciate the beauties of nature than is the boy on the farm. The latter may be too much a part of nature to perceive anything in the way of art significance, even if his practical contact with it allows him to sense anything of its beauty. At any rate, birth in the city does not prevent one from experiencing rural contacts; and if one is of the more privileged urban classes, he is likely to have opportunity to travel widely and to touch life at many points, gathering to himself whatever his unique combination of natural capacity and training fits him to use.

Then, too, it is in the city that the finest examples of all of the arts are to be found. And early access to these models must be of extreme importance to the future artist. The better facilities for training are located there; and it is likely true that high success, at least in certain of the arts, is more dependent upon a good quality of early training than is the case in other fields of endeavor. Most important of all, surely, is the presence in the cities of appreciative groups of individuals who can give the capable young person the encouragement and the criticism that may spur him on his way. The great artists themselves are there, at least a part of the time; and they are but the nucleus of a much larger number of individuals who have the leisure and the inclination and the ability to make themselves useful somewhere in the wide field of the fine arts.

One finds little evidence in the statistical information given above to support the somewhat generally held assumption that the country-born are more likely to excel in activities having to do with *things*, as distinguished from the city-born who are more likely to choose lines of activity dealing with *people*. Engineering, more a matter of things than any other of the occupations, occupies a fairly high place, from the standpoint of urban birth, while church, politics, and education, very much concerned with people, are near the rural end of the scale. Art, most urban of all, is in many of its forms, for example architecture and landscape painting, an affair very much of *things*.

The popular idea that farmers and in general those of rural birth are more naturally inclined to be interested in things rather than in people is indicated by every census of student opinion of which the author has knowledge. The composite opinion of a group of students may be depended upon to rate art and engineering much lower in the scale than their actual positions, also to rate politics much higher. Just why such faulty notions should be current is difficult to understand. It would seem that it might quite generally be reasoned that, when the ambitious farm-born boy turns away from the occupation of his father, this process is likely to involve more or less of a revolt against the world of things and a search for a place in life where human contacts are more numerous and varied. Following the same line of reasoning, one would quite naturally expect to find that a certain proportion of those who, though city-born, have come to work very largely at points relatively isolated from society are men and women who when younger became weary of constant social stimulation and have turned to their present mode of life to give their natures the opportunity for self-expression in some sequestered nook, away from the rush of life's main highways.

Reasons for Advocating an Equalization of Opportunities

From the standpoint of the larger society which should have in its places of distinction the most capable individuals that may be found, and from that of the individual young person who should be guarded against the dangers of becoming a misfit in the general social scheme, everything that is at all practicable should be done to afford the sons and daughters of farmers increased opportunities for locating themselves in life on the basis of enlightened choice and competition. With inherited potentialities the same, the places of prominence will be presumed, in general, to be taken by the children of those already successful in the various fields of business and the professions. This will be true not only of those who find places among the thirty thousand or so who are mentioned in such a volume as *Who's Who in America*, which purports to contain the names of a relatively small group of the more eminent individuals. It will be

true as well of the much larger number of those who, though successfully engaged in similar activities, fall short of the degree of achievement considered essential to qualify for mention in the lists of the distinguished. Inherited potentialities of a high order, however, are not in the least lacking among the children of farmers and laborers. Certain numbers of these children are more capable by nature than are others more favorably situated in the prevailing social order. The truly efficient society will do what can be done in the way of equalizing opportunities. Not simply, or even mainly, for the sake of the individual should he be compelled to ascend the mountain of choice before he is allowed to begin his life vocation in his own little valley of specialization.

America takes its national game baseball very seriously. The total general concern for efficiency in this activity may be actually greater than that in any other of our various activities unless it be the making of motion pictures. The drive for efficiency is so powerful that those responsible for the management of this so-called "sport" are with most constant care searching the whole land over for potential Ty Cobbs, Babe Ruths, Walter Johnsons, and Robert Groves. The men of distinction in baseball come from every social stratum. Apparently, family environment is of slight consequence in determining who will or will not find places among the nation's great in this field of achievement. Rural communities never before heard from in a national way gain a degree of fame because of their production of baseball stars, a surprisingly large number of whom are born on farms or in small towns.

A well-rounded democracy would search as carefully for talent of every desirable sort as America is now searching for baseball talent. It should be of serious national concern that the potentially most capable writers and musicians and architects and engineers and surgeons and lawyers and ministers and scholars and statesmen should be found and trained and set to work. The advantage to the larger society of the successful pursuance of such a policy should be obvious. The advantage to the local community should be none the less clear. For the same reason that college fraternities wish to be well represented in general college activities, local communities, both rural and urban, should feel it a matter of local pride to be well represented in the larger arena of the nation's life. As fraternities and other college groups urge their capable but possibly modest members into the try-outs that may lead to distinction in some field of college service, a very real part of a well-developed community program should consist in the like activity of scrutinizing the community young people with care for any indication of talent that might be developed for distinguished service in a larger world of which the community is but a part.

It should be a recognized function of the school to select students who may apparently profit by attending higher institutions of learning.

While not acting to discourage any who combine ambition with the ability to work hard, the school should bring decided pressure to bear upon the relatively few who show signs of possessing unusual ability. Some of the latter are sure to be characterized by unassuming, retiring natures that, unless stimulated into ambition for personal development, will slip quietly back into the life of the community to carry on some work that might be performed as well, or better, by some other less talented person.

The school will hardly perform its selective function well unless the prevailing community attitudes are favorably inclined and the assumption of favorable attitudes must in many cases await the working of a general educative process in the community. There is need for the development of the thought of those who direct the thinking of the community into a vivid consciousness of the existence of a social unit much larger than the community itself, accompanied by some comprehension of the organic nature of the relationship between the individual community and the larger unit. A healthy sharing by the rural community of the general life involves a nice balance between two conflicting tendencies. Upon the one hand, the community as a community must lead a somewhat self-sufficient existence, serving itself socially to a large extent from its own home-reared human resources. Upon the other hand, it must have a close and vital relationship with a larger world outside both through the lives of those who have come to it from without and of those who have gone out from its homes to live and work in other communities, both rural and urban. These two tendencies—the one, to organize within, the other, to make contacts without—may properly be thought of as complementary. The greater the efficiency of the local institutions in the development of well-rounded personalities, the more creditably the community will be represented in the larger society; the finer and more capable the individuals who have gone out from the community to live elsewhere, provided their success is appreciated by their former friends and associates, the greater may be expected to be the enthusiasm for the maintenance of wholesome developmental conditions for on-coming young people. Residents of a community may take pride in the fact that they have good social surroundings within which to live and at the same time be proud also that their community has contributed men and women of distinction to the larger society.

Obviously, the older a community becomes, the greater the probability, in general, that it will have been the birthplace of individuals of national or world eminence. One essential phase of a thoroughly constructive community program would seem to be something in the nature of an organized remembering of the individuals who have done notable credit to the place of their birth. The lives of such individuals should be enabled to count not only through the specialized service that they may

have given to the larger society but also as focal points of community interest, thereby aiding in the development and preservation of community consciousness and serving as definite sources of inspiration for later generations of young people in the community.

Narrowness of vision on the part of the leadership of rural communities has been partly responsible in the past for the relatively small number of farm-born individuals who have made their way to posts of eminence.

CHAPTER V

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARMING CLASS OF AMERICA

It is difficult to realize how very new is American society when compared with the age-long social development of Europe. Farming and non-farming people alike, even of our oldest families, have but recently arrived, for the most part as migrants from across the Atlantic. In beginning a study of the origins of our farming class it is natural to turn to Europe, and especially to England, for information as to the nature of agricultural society there prior to the colonization of America.

Early English Agricultural Life

The earliest known form of agricultural community is the village community. This form was widespread among ancient peoples and it continued in medieval England as the very heart of her rural society; and, as the England of that period was almost entirely rural, all present-day Americans of English descent must have had ancestors living in these small agricultural villages during the medieval period.

The larger villages were made up of fifty or so houses closely grouped, usually near running water. The smaller villages probably contained no more than ten or twelve houses. In general, these dwellings were arranged about an open space usually somewhat circular in shape which was for the common use of the villagers. About each house, in certain of the villages at least, was a garden plot for the private use of the family. The houses were of the most simple construction, and these buildings sheltered, in addition to the family, the livestock and the harvested crops. Stretching away from the village, back of the houses, were the tilled land, the pasture, and the wood lot.

All of this land was held jointly by the villagers, the portions which were tilled or used as meadows being divided by the community in such a way as to give each family as fair a share as possible for its own use. To facilitate an equitable division, all of the land for tillage was divided into plots of an acre or so each, narrow strips forty rods long by four rods wide. A farmer tilling thirty acres, which seems to have been the usual amount in Saxon times, would have for his use thirty separate plots of land so selected as to give him his share of the poorest as well as of the best land. Thus each family produced its own living, in accordance with rules made by the village group. In addition to community legis-

lation concerning farm policy, certain other local matters were attended to by the village assembly. In other words, the English agricultural village of medieval days was largely self-governing on a basis of equality among the residents.

With the coming of the Normans, came the full-fledged feudal system which seems to have had its beginnings early in Saxon times. All the land was thenceforth conceived to belong primarily to the king and secondarily to such lords as he might designate. The peasant villages were grouped into manors, each with its lord. The inhabitants of the villages were divided into classes upon the basis of their relationship to the lord of the manor. The most favored class, and one comparatively small, was made up of the yeomen, who were free to leave the manor if they chose. The relationship to their lord seems to have been more flexible and more upon an individual basis than was the case with other classes. They were a select group. Beneath them were the villeins and the cottars who were obliged to give a very large share of their labor in service to the lord of the manor and were obliged also to remain on the manor and in the lord's service throughout their lifetime unless the lord should choose otherwise. Legally, the huts which they occupied and the land which they tilled were not their property but rather that of the lord of the manor.

The manorial system gradually brought about village decay. The lords were bound to find pretexts to enhance their private holdings and power at the expense of the communities of small farmers. Great houses were built and large areas were fenced off for the private use of the legal masters of the land. With the development of manufacturing and of town life came the wage system and other changes. Many peasants were dispossessed, the land which they had formerly tilled being used for sheep pasturage. Such land as was thenceforth rented was mainly let for cash. The highly favored yeomen were allowed to enclose their small holdings. Villeins in large numbers became wage earners, with no legal claim of any sort to land, and many of them were driven out of their ancestral villages. This process of the gradual destruction of the English village community was not finished until well along in the nineteenth century.

Agricultural Beginnings in America

Seventeenth century English migrants to America were representative of the two sorts of rural life just described. To Virginia and the South came those who were used to thinking and living in terms of the English manorial system. Aristocrats, slaves, and all intermediary grades were represented on the southern plantation, and, as Sims remarks, in certain respects the plantation still remains manorial. To New England came representatives of the more ancient village life of the Old

World. Freed from manorial domination, these settlers organized their community life along lines of their own choosing, which naturally followed very closely their traditional models. The life of early New England agriculturalists was a village life, as distinguished from that of the separate farmsteads generally prevalent throughout the northern states today. The houses grouped about a common, the tilled land, pasture, and wood lot back of the houses and extending about the town, all for general use in accordance with village legislation, characterized the early New England settlements as they had for centuries during the medieval period characterized the rural life of Old England.

The early New England agricultural fathers of America were mainly not from the English lower rural classes. This seems to be a point worth stressing. They were mainly yeomen rather than peasants.[1] Whatever may have been the basis of division of English villages into various grades at the time of the Norman invasion, the New England colonists were in the main descendants of the more favored group. They were a middle-class people, with all that is implied in such an expression in terms of experience with freedom. They were also relatively few in numbers, less than twenty thousand coming to New England during the 13-year period 1628–1641. During the remainder of the colonial period more returned to Old England than came over. Not only were they of the English middle class, but they were a highly selected portion of that class. With the extremely hard conditions of the voyage and of settlement in America in those early years, the few who came must have been unusually endowed with initiative, courage, and stamina. American farmers of the present day who trace their ancestry, as a large share of them might, to this little band of English colonists are tracing back to a select group of sturdy pioneers of middle-class tradition. Others whose American lineage is of more recent origin, whatever the social status of their most recent European ancestors may have been, have largely taken on a middle-class attitude toward life. This has been in part due to the sort of opportunities the young, growing nation could afford to those who would settle upon the land. It has undoubtedly also been partly due to the traditions of the American agricultural population which had its origin with those first settlers in New England in the early seventeenth century. Traditionally, the American farmer is not a peasant. If he becomes such, as some predict, his peasantry will be distinctly American made rather than a reversion to some European ancestral type.

While by far the larger portion of those who came to America during the colonial period became farmers, there seems to be no reason for assuming that they in any real sense were thus expressing a preference for

[1] Brewer, W. H., "History of American Agriculture," Tenth Census, Volume *Agriculture*, U. S. Bureau of the Census, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

the occupation of agriculture as contrasted with other occupations. Many who came were artisans rather than farmers by experience, and it seems reasonable to suppose that in their cases the essential transformation was not an occupational one. They were choosing America, and their reasons for deciding to migrate were so impelling that they were prepared to give up many things, including their former occupations. The colonial policy of the time was such as to make manufacturing well-nigh impossible and to force nearly all who came into the business of farming. Even as late as 1782, J. Hector St. John, who then wrote his *Letters from an American Farmer* and who therein remarked that as he was a carpenter by trade he could make his own plow, said, "Some few towns excepted, we are all tillers of the earth, from Nova Scotia to West Florida." Even without the restrictive policy of the mother country, agriculture would of necessity have been the chief occupation of the colonists in the early days. Their most insistent business upon settling was to procure a supply of food from the soil. Although many in the North became engaged in fishing and commerce, in general the colonists chose farming when they chose America.

Influence of the National Land Policy

Of prime importance is a consideration of the policy of the federal government in regard to the public domain, as it has contributed to the fixing of the conditions of choice of occupation of the American people. At the close of the American Revolution the American population scattered along the Atlantic seaboard were for the most part farmers. These men, though tilling the land, were in no very accurate sense an agricultural class. In comparison with the classes of European population of the time, they were for the most part tradesmen and mechanics by nature rather than farmers. The typical American farmer of the early days was a natural mechanic and engineer.[1] Though the Americans of the time possessed inventive ability and mechanical skill to a remarkable degree, due in large measure, undoubtedly, to the fact that they were the product of selective forces which had operated to carry some of the more energetic of European mechanics and artisans to the New World, yet for reasons stated above they were tilling the soil. In the critical time of national beginnings when various policies were being adopted that were to influence permanently the development of American industrial and social life, no one policy was of more vital consequence than that which determined that the artisans and mechanics should be encouraged to continue tilling the soil.

It is not the author's present purpose to discuss the wisdom of the policies of the government in regard to the disposition of the public

[1] Walker, F. A., *The Making of the Nation*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1895.

lands. Clearly, instead of the attitude of free-handed liberality which has been held in the matter of the disposition of the Western lands, one of conservatism might have been adopted. Whether or not the conservative policy would have justified itself in the long run is an interesting question. The important fact from the standpoint of the present discussion is that the energetic young men of the East, though inclined naturally to many and various occupations and callings, moved in a throng to the lands of the West.

Sato, in defense of the national policies, writes, "The nation had to derive wealth and strength from permanent natural improvements upon the public lands by inviting enterprising settlers from the old states or from abroad, through free and liberal grants of land."[1] And again, "What a new country needs is actual improvement of the landed property and, when accomplished, such improvement redounds to the general prosperity of a state or nation."[2]

Bookwalter sees a different picture. He says,

> The truth succinctly stated is that during the past fifty years, urged on by the insistence of an impatient and false spirit of progress, we have in a manner dissipated the fairest agricultural patrimony ever received by man from the bounteous hand of nature, and (as is the wont of the improvident) we now find ourselves, at a time when abundance should prevail, in the midst of an increasing scarcity.[3]

Again Bookwalter remarks that in order to develop the new lands quickly the government was obliged to resort to "artificial stimulants."[4]

Obviously, the typical settler from the East had not, after a rational balancing of his inclinations and natural aptitudes in regard to various occupations, chosen that of agriculture; he had rather chosen the home which came as a gift. The fact that the occupation of farming was in most cases tied up with the getting of a home had slight influence with the settlers. Undoubtedly the movement would have been as rapid had the performance of nearly any other sort of labor been linked with the occupancy of the lands. The "home" was the essential thing. All through the period of western settlement those who were entering upon the new lands were referred to as "home seekers."

In eulogy of the Homestead Law which offers to every applicant, who is the head of a family or above the age of twenty-one, 160 acres of public land free of charge, the Public Land Commission said, "It protects the government, it fills the states with homes, it builds up communities, and

[1] Sato, Shosuke, *History of the Land Question in the United States*, p. 130, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1886

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 160.

[3] Bookwalter, J. W., *Rural versus Urban*, p. 276, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1910.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 148.

lessens the chances of social and civil disorder by giving ownership of the soil in small tracts to the occupants thereof." It was felt to be a blessing to individuals in that it offered to those who had lost out in the competitive struggle of life an opportunity to begin again in an occupation that was virtually free from the requirements imposed by competitive industry.

Copp, a land lawyer in Washington at the time of the enactment of the Homestead Law, said, as quoted by Sato,

> All in the Atlantic states who are discouraged with the slow, tedious methods of reaching independence, will find rich rewards . . . on the public lands, . . . while the unfortunate in business, and they who are burdened with debt can in the West and South, start anew in the race of life, for the homestead law expressly declares that "no lands acquired under the provision of this chapter (Homestead) shall in any event become liable to the satisfaction of any debt contracted prior to the issuing of the patent therefor."[1]

While the movement westward was for the getting of homes, the homes obtained were at least in a large proportion of cases valued less for themselves than for what they represented. The home became symbolic of a start in life and was in most of the cases thought of in terms of its selling price. This at least was the impression made by the American farmer upon Tocqueville and other European visitors of the early part of the nineteenth century. These writers agree in testifying to the predominance of the speculative instinct, the farmer's desire to make something by a clever bargain. They say nothing of his love for the open country nor of his fondness for the occupation of agriculture.

Tocqueville writing in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century observed as follows:

> Almost all farmers of the United States combine some trade with agriculture; most of them make agriculture itself a trade. It seldom happens that an American farmer settles for good upon the land which he occupies; especially in the districts of the Far West, he brings land into tillage in order to sell again, and not to farm it; he builds a farmhouse on the speculation that, as the state of the country will soon be changed by the increase of population, a good price may be obtained for it.[2]

J. F. W. Johnston, in his *Notes on North America* as quoted by Bogart, wrote at about the same time, "There is scarcely any such thing in New England and New York as local attachment . . . Speaking generally, every farm from Eastport in Maine to Buffalo on Lake Erie is for sale."[3]

[1] Sato, Shosuke, *History of the Land Question in the United States*, p. 179, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1886.

[2] Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 2, Chap. XIX, Sever and Francis, Cambridge, Mass., 1863.

[3] Bogart, E. L., *The Economic History of the United States*, p. 235, Longmans, Green, & Co., New York, 1907.

James Caird, M. P., mentions a Mr. M'Connel, whom he took to be a representative farmer in the West, who bought his farm for 1 pound an acre, and "could now sell it for 10 pounds." "He is so firmly persuaded of the rapidly growing wealth of the fine old state (Illinois) that he has no doubt of his farm being worth 20 pounds an acre a few years hence."[1]

Influence of Immigration and Expansion

During the sixty-year period immediately following the American Revolution, immigrants to America were relatively few in numbers. All through this period the hand-laboring population of the nation, the common laborers of the towns as well as the men and women on the farms, were overwhelmingly of native birth. During this time the birth rate was exceedingly high, so high in fact that the population was doubling itself in every twenty-five years simply through natural increase. The surplus population of the Eastern states was moving farther and farther west. This westward-moving throng was made up mainly from those more energetic and capable young people of the hand-laboring population of the East. Those whose prospects were good for successful careers in the professional and business worlds of the older states could in general have had no motive to take up a life of pioneering in the inland wilderness and the less ambitious and active sons and daughters of farmers and other manual laborers could have found no sufficient incentive for engaging in the hard life on the frontier.

In the late "thirties" of the nineteenth century, the immigration stream began to assume significant proportions. In 1842, more than a hundred thousand entered. From that time on until the World War, immigrants from Europe poured in great numbers, in a continuous stream, into the manual-labor classes of America. The Irish, who made up the bulk of immigrants during the early years of this period, went mainly to the cities. The results of their coming may be traced in various directions. With the expansion of industry, which their labor helped to accelerate, came additional impetus to the occupancy of farm lands. Native-born laborers in the East who found themselves working side by side with the lately arrived "undesirables" from Europe suddenly became less loth to assume the role of farm pioneers on the new lands of the West. Opportunities for advancement into the more genteel positions in the rapidly developing industrial and social life of the older sections of the country became more numerous. The increasing numbers of laborers and farmers made necessary a correspondingly increased number of business and professional men. For the laborers, there were needed executives and bosses of various ranks. For laborers and farmers both, there was the need of a rapidly growing supply of merchants and

[1] Caird, James, *Prairie Farming in America*, D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1859.

bankers, of teachers and ministers and lawyers and doctors. American-made middle and upper classes of business and professional men were rapidly recruited into groups of considerable size and these groups have constantly grown by additions from below to keep pace with the increasing number of manual toilers. The whole process reminds one of the making of a gigantic army in a comparatively short space of time. The immigrants enter almost exclusively as privates. The more privates who are brought into service, the greater the numbers of officers to be provided; and these officers must be developed almost exclusively through promotion from the ranks.

With the coming of immigrants in large numbers, class lines became more sharply drawn. A prejudice against the immigrants themselves very naturally extended itself to include the sort of work which immigrants did. This type of work more really than had been the case before in the northern states became a "lower-class" occupation, to be shunned by the native-born. Farmers had some points in common with the hand laborers of the non-farm vocations. They worked mainly with their hands as did the latter, and their hands became coarse and calloused just as did those of the Irish who worked with pick and shovel on the railroads and in the mines. They, too, wore the same sort of clothing at their work and were as surely to have it soiled by contact with earth elements. They had more in common, however, with the urban middle classes. For one thing, they were actually independent business men directing their own operations and those of their families and, possibly, for a part or all of the year, that of one or two hired laborers besides. Then, again, they owned the houses they lived in and the land which they tilled. Even though this ownership came about as a gift of a nation rich in land, it was real and actually had in a way been paid for by the endurance of frontier privations and by physical labor at least as arduous as that of any in the nation. They were, in the main, of native birth, which related them to the native-born professional and business men of the cities both biologically and spiritually rather than to the hand-laboring aliens lately arrived from Europe. From every agricultural community young men had gone and were going to the cities to make names for themselves in the more genteel vocations; and for those who were to leave the farms a middle-class goal in the city was considered a normal aspiration. To drift into hand labor, under a boss, was a process of failure.

Other groups of immigrants followed the Irish, and large numbers of those from the countries of Northern Europe went to the farms of the Middle West. Many of these people were from the peasant classes abroad and came to this country traditionally set to hold a lower-class attitude toward the American social scheme. Contact with the native-born American farmer, however, along with the fact of the acquisition

of agricultural resources hardly even to be dreamed of in the old home, inevitably brought about a change of attitude upon their part. With the coming to our cities of still newer groups of aliens from Italy and the Slavic countries, new "inferiors" to be looked down upon, in general their change of attitude was complete. They had become members of the American middle class.

From the very beginning, farmers' sons who were leaving the farms were adding themselves in significant numbers to the rapidly expanding non-farm middle class. In America, the nineteenth century was peculiarly a period of so-called "self-made men." The expression is not an apt one. It does not at all tell the truth. In one sense, all men are self-made, for whatever any individual achieves he does through the self. In another sense, no man is self-made, for whatever his individual achievement it is only his own peculiar reaction, or series of reactions, to the sum total of material thrown up before him by society in the form of suggestions. Whether consciously or not, the total conduct of every individual is in the nature of a sort of team play carried on with associates who very likely are themselves entirely unconscious of the help they are inevitably affording others in the making of whatever sort of destiny each may be achieving. At any rate, some term is needed to characterize the success of those individuals who have made names for themselves with relatively little conscious aid having been received from others; and out of a period of individualistic thinking has come the term "self-made."

Throughout most of this period, the schools, both rural and urban, contributed relatively little in a definitely practical way to the success of aspiring young people. Certain fundamental character traits were almost all-important in the upward climb of the ambitious. Common sense, shrewdness, frugality, habits of industry, and determination, along with a good stock of physical vigor, were the chief assets of the successful applicants for the opening places in the rapidly expanding worlds of business and the professions. A most important social phenomenon this—the coming into existence in America in a few brief decades of a great group of middle- and upper-class people through the opening of the public lands. Upon the basis of the wealth of natural resources suddenly made available in the form of farm lands and of vast supplies of timber and mineral stores, great numbers of families who had shortly before entered the country as almost penniless laborers were carried into positions of varying degrees of eminence and power in the newly made social order.

American colleges and universities are today made up largely of students who, though not themselves born on farms, are only one or two or three generations removed from farm life. A large share of these students owe in a more or less immediate way their very existence to the large-family programs of pioneer ancestors. A very considerable part

of the remainder owe their membership in the middle-class non-farm groups to the expansion of these groups made possible, and really inevitable, by the opening of the western lands. Had there been no western lands to open—consequently no great stream of immigration to make possible the rapid exploitation of the resources made available—most of these students who are now comfortably making their way through our higher institutions of learning to middle- and upper-class places would be otherwise engaged—that is, those of them who would even have been born. Instead of being the sons and daughters of bankers and merchants and manufacturers and doctors and lawyers and ministers, they would in the main be the children of manual laborers, either on farm or in factory, and would in general be entering the ranks of manual labor—and at an early age.

Status of the Farmer in the Changing Social Stratification in America

In the very nature of things, such a process as has just been outlined may take place only once in any country, and this "once" for America is apparently almost over. The occupancy of the public lands has taken place, the immigration stream is rapidly being diverted from our shores, greater social stability is inevitably developing, the climbing of the ladder of gentility has suddenly become a much more difficult task than has heretofore been the case with us. The necessity is over for a rapid increase in numbers of the professional and business classes. These classes may almost perpetuate themselves in the future and make provision for such expansion as is called for through their own natural increase. Consequently, the sons and daughters of those engaged in manual labor must more and more generally follow in the occupational footsteps of their parents.

Paths must be kept open for the advancement of exceptional individuals. This advancement, however, is bound to be less and less of the nineteenth century sort, a largely unorganized, undirected, individualistic scramble in which a rough-and-ready fighting spirit carried so many up the ladder. The elaborate machinery of formal education is likely to have a larger and larger part to play in the processes of selection. Personality traits, in addition to certain fundamental qualities of character, will without doubt be given increasingly more consideration and weight. Those who would aspire to high position in our rapidly stabilizing society must meet the competition of the children of those who will have previously achieved such position. Other things being equal, the children of those who are already in will have a tremendous advantage in the more keenly competitive days ahead.

From the standpoint of rural sociology, the chief significance in this process of growing social stability is the probability that the farming

population which in America has been predominantly of middle-class status is being transformed into a lower-class group. There is good reason to believe that, irrespective of whether the family-unit system prevails indefinitely in agriculture or not, the men and women who do the manual labor essential to the raising of farm produce will more and more come to be considered, and will so consider themselves, a part of the great American lower class. The farmer's traditional independence, so largely a product of governmental grant, is being lessened. An increasing proportion of American farmers are renters and laborers, who are thus individually responsible to landlords or employers; and of those who are owner-managers, an increasing proportion are in debt and thus to some extent responsible to creditors.

With the increasing numbers of native-born in urban industry, due to immigration restriction, the farmer's traditional contempt for city factory hands is sure to decrease. With the old easy paths towards success in the fields of business and the professions so largely blocked, even highly capable young people from the farms are no longer demeaning themselves when they take lower-class city jobs. The non-farm relatives and friends of farming people will more and more be located near the bottom of the industrial ladder. In other words, if the process of transformation so hurriedly sketched has been correctly described, it in part involves the lowering of the status of the typical American farmer from that of middle-class rank to one appreciably lower in the scale.

Admittedly, one is on dangerous ground when discussing the subject of social stratification, especially as related to such a new society as that of America. There can be no question but that in each reflective person's mind there is the notion of a ladder of gentility. The danger comes in the tendency of individual thinkers and writers toward the attempted generalization of the concept of such a ladder. As a matter of fact, individuals, because of differences in taste and in experience, are bound to have differing scales of values. Because of such differing scales of values, they will not agree as to whether a given vertical change on the social ladder is a movement *up* or *down*.

It is mainly, however, as regards slight changes in the scale about which there would be disagreement. It surely would be an exceptional individual who would feel that a coal heaver's son had not elevated himself were he to become head of a bank or of a college; and conversely that a bank president's son had not slipped down several rungs of the ladder were he to spend his life heaving coal.

The matter of social stratification is complicated greatly when the attempt is made to place the farmer in this scale. In the past, at least, agricultural and non-agricultural types of life have been so unlike, and so widely separated, that the movement of a farmer's son into another occupation has been to many people chiefly interesting in its horizontal

aspects. The important fact is that "Jim has left the farm for the city." Whether Jim's going to the city should be considered as ascent or descent may be a matter of considerable doubt, even if the exact nature of his new work were clearly understood. Were Jim to become president of a bank or of a college, there would presumably be pretty complete agreement that he had climbed the ladder. If his going to the city involved his turning his back upon fair prospects as a farmer to become an unskilled manual laborer, there would presumably be almost as complete agreement that he had dropped in the social scale.

There is, however, fairly general agreement that the more distinguished business and professional men are members of an upper class in the social system and that unskilled manual laborers are just as truly members of a lower class. It is agreed, too, that typical small-farm owner-operators and their families make up a group whose general social rating is somewhere between the two extremes. To speak of a three-class social scheme is to simplify the situation beyond the range of fact. There are many more than three rungs in the ladder of gentility. The ladder may, however, be arbitrarily divided into three sections, each consisting of several rungs. The mind seems quite naturally to make such a three-part division, with uppers and lowers and "in-betweens." It is very likely that most people who have thought much about it would place the American farmer in the middle division. It is just as likely that most people would rate the moderately successful doctor or lawyer in the same general division, although one or two or more rungs higher up the ladder than the farmer. There is small room for doubt that most farmers' sons who have become moderately successful in the professions have considered themselves to have risen in the social scale. Neither can it be doubted that in general their parents and former associates have shared their attitude.

It seems clear that for the reasons outlined earlier in this chapter the farmer class is gradually taking on a lower rating in the social scale. Coincident with this change in status of the farmer comes a transformation in the living and working conditions of the urban lower classes which renders their lot, in general, much less undesirable than it formerly was. Cleaner, more healthful working conditions, shorter hours, improved means of transit, an extension of public health, recreational and educational facilities, decreasing contact with the foreign-born, all are contributing to such a transformation of lower-class urban life as to render it less unattractive to migrants from the farms.

CHAPTER VI

SOME ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

The economic structure of a nation is a great cooperative system. Each productive individual is making a contribution *to* the whole of something that he possesses in the way of land, capital, or labor and receiving *from* the whole something that he needs or desires which has been contributed by other individuals who are members of the same cooperative system. This system is more than nation wide, being actually world-wide in extent, as far as the countries of the civilized world are concerned. In spite of barriers obstructing the free flow of economic goods which various nations have set up, each national group is to a considerable extent a member of the world-wide economic system.

In earlier days the farmer was to a much smaller extent than at present a sharer of the common economic life. He formerly consumed the most of what he produced and produced most of what he consumed, merely bartering what little surplus he found himself in possession of for some few absolute essentials, which he could not produce for himself, and possibly for some additional articles which from his point of view were luxuries. With the coming of the industrial revolution, with its machines and factories and division of labor and new industrial populations to be fed from the produce of the farms, the farmer was gradually merged more and more completely into the economic whole, carrying increasing amounts of produce to the towns and returning to his home laden with more and more manufactured goods. Even yet the American farmer does not share as completely in this great cooperative enterprise as do most other members of society. He produces a larger part of what he consumes than does anyone else. He has a tendency to derive more satisfaction from the realization that the food which he and his family eat has come from his own land rather than from a grocery store than in the realization of an attempt to provide for himself and family a sufficient variety of food to constitute a well-balanced diet. He is likely also to do his own carpenter work and his wife to do most of her own sewing. In other words, the farmer and his family are far less highly specialized in their activities than are most people of the modern industrial world. The fact that the farm-family lives on a more primitive economic plane than do the families of the cities is one factor which makes for a feeling of difference between farmers and others. Another economic factor making for a sense of difference is the fact, either real or imagined, that the

farmer does not get his rightful share of the national income when the significance of his contribution is taken into account.

Let us imagine an enormous reservoir into which the results of the productive efforts of all individuals who are contributing to the cooperative whole are poured. Into this reservoir go manufactured goods and personal services of every sort, along with the products of the soil. Each individual, as he works, is pouring into the top of this great storage place his contribution, and he draws his pay by taking from the bottom of the receptacle as much of the things that he would like to have as he is allowed to get. The farmer pours into the top the wheat and cotton and fruit and beef and dairy products which are the result of the fertility of his land combined with his managerial efforts and manual labor. He draws from the bottom his pay in the form of clothing, automobiles, household furnishings, and the services of school teachers and doctors and others. He takes all he can get from the bottom of that reservoir just as does everyone else. He thinks he is not getting so much as are other members of society who are contributing no more of intelligence and manual skill and effort than he. Students of the subject are pretty generally in agreement with him on this matter.

It is frequently said that agriculture is America's most important occupation. From the standpoint of the great variety of goods and services going to make up a twentieth century standard of living, such a notion is patently absurd. There is no most important occupation because there is no one element in the modern scheme of living that is of supreme importance. Food and other products derived from the soil are a necessity, but so are a thousand and one other articles, besides the various sorts of personal services provided by professional men and artists.

It is of course true that most of the raw materials entering into the production of food and clothing come from the farms. Thus one may speak of the products from the farm as being of fundamental importance, viewing the process of production chronologically. There is no more reason, however, from this point of view for saying that the farmer is performing the most important economic function than there would be in saying that the man who prepared the foundation of a house was a more important factor in the process of house building than the man who put on the roof. The house is not a house unless it has a roof as well as a foundation. It is just as true that modern life is not modern life at all unless it is made up of a great variety of things, each furnished by certain more or less specialized workmen, none of whom has any justification for considering his type of labor to be more essential than that of most other men who are to be thought of as working side by side with him in the great cooperative enterprise.

The theory of a free system is that those who labor will be paid, for what they do, an amount proportionate to their individual ability to

contribute to the satisfaction of human wants. Men are free to move about from place to place and from occupation to occupation in a horizontal sort of way. They are free, also, to move vertically to higher-paid positions than those which they have been occupying, provided they are able, or may prepare themselves through study and training to be able, to do the sort of work performed at the higher level. In the long run, in other words, individuals are assumed to locate themselves in the economic world in such a way that economic reward will be in proportion to the abilities of those concerned. If farmers are less well paid than other men of no greater ability, the solution, the economist explains, is for enough farmers to leave the occupation, and enter others that are more highly paid, to bring about an equality of income between farmers and others. Professor John D. Black insists that, if the average income of farming people is no higher than certain investigating bodies have concluded it to be, a good share of farmers should be thought of as "boobs" for not getting into some better paid occupation. He thinks that they are not "boobs" or "ignoramuses" and therefore that the findings of the investigating bodies must be at fault.

Professor Black's own conclusions as to the net income of farmers for the year 1927–1928 are as follows:[1] If the farmer was allowed the wages of a hired man, without board, current for that year of $584, plus wages of management of $500, plus family food and fuel produced on the farm estimated at double the farm value, there was left the sum of $187, which would amount to 3.7 per cent return on his investment in agricultural production of $5,088. The percentage of return on capital was higher than this in 1919–1920 and 1925–1926. It was lower than 3.7 per cent in the remaining six of the eight preceding years.

The factors of production utilized by the farmer, upon each of which an income should be derived, are many. There is, first of all, the land itself, the return from which constitutes rent. There is capital investment in stock and tools and machinery, from which interest should be derived. There is a certain degree of managerial ability employed by the farmer, which should earn him something in the way of salary. There is also the manual labor of the farmer, which should be considered as worth at least as high a wage as that which farm laborers actually receive. There is the work of the wife and the young children, who are not listed among the "gainfully employed." The average farmer gets far less than an adequate financial return when all of these factors are taken into account. If he thinks of himself as getting a fair return on his investment in land and capital, he cannot consider that he is getting wages as high as his ability would seem to warrant. If, upon the other hand, he thinks of his income as representing very satisfactory wages,

[1] Black, John D., *Agricultural Reform in the United States*, p. 26, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1929.

he must acknowledge that the return upon his investment is unseemly low. If he allowed an adequate wage to his wife and children as well as to himself for the productive labor which they perform, he might be obliged to conclude that his farm was worth absolutely nothing as a source of income, but that the ownership of the land merely insured himself and family of a chance to earn wages. As is the case of all averages, most of the units concerned exist either above or below the average point. There are many highly successful farmers; there are a greater number, however, whose economic situation is inferior to that which has been depicted.

One's estimate of the average farmer's economic wisdom or foolishness in remaining in the occupation is dependent upon the scale of values of the one who is making the estimate. From the point of view of the skilled laborer in the city who receives a definite hourly wage, with time and a half for overtime, or of the reasonably successful manager of a small business who is "cashing in" on each of the various factors of production that he utilizes, or of the moderately successful professional man, the average farmer, who is also a middle-class man, as are they, is fit subject for pity or ridicule. From the average farmer's own point of view, the case is likely to be quite different. He has his scale of values as have the others, the product of a very different type of tradition. He is dissatisfied with the lack of what he considers to be a proper balance between the earning power of agriculture and of other occupations. Farmers on the whole are not badly enough dissatisfied, however, to do the one thing that would surely bring about that proper balance: abandon the occupation in sufficient numbers to precipitate a food shortage that would result in a decided elevation of the prices of food stuffs.

Reasons for the Relatively Low Financial Returns of Agriculture

There are relatively too many people in the occupation. This surplus of farmers produces a surplus of food. The surplus of food—or, as is sometimes said, the fact that food is pressing upon the population instead of the population pressing upon the food supply—is bound to make the price of this food per unit low. America has enough land to feed a population possibly twice as large as that of the present. A governmental land policy may be imagined which would have opened land for settlement very slowly, limiting the amount under cultivation to such an extent that food prices would have been kept on a level with the prices of other commodities. Such a policy might naturally have been favored by those who already owned farms. It would not have been favored, however, by those who wished access to farm homes for other than economic reasons or by those financially poor people of the earlier settled regions who could see a chance for economic gain through receiving

a gift of land from the government. Neither would it have been favored by the urban industrialists who thought in terms of the desirability of cheap food for their laborers. The protective tariff made possible high prices on goods sold to the home consumer. Cheap food made possible low wages for the laborers who produced the goods. Low production costs and high selling prices taken together have produced the enormous business profits that have characterized America's industrial history. From the standpoint of American industry there have not been, and are not now, too many people on farms. From the standpoint of the farmers themselves, however, they are too numerous.

The unfavorable economic situation in agriculture has been accentuated during the past few years by certain clearly marked factors. The most important of these factors was the World War. During the war, agriculture was given an artificial stimulus by the governmental policy of temporarily making the occupation profitable. Profits in agriculture naturally made for expansion of the industry. An increased amount of land was put into use in order that food might be provided for the Allies. Many who were not already farm owners bid up the prices of farm land to unheard-of levels. After the war, the emergency past, demand for foodstuffs dropped down to, or below, its former normal level, while the supply persisted at the emergency level which had been artificially induced. This spelled ruin for many who had gone heavily in debt to pay for high-priced land, and economic hardship for many who were less severely affected than the former.

Notwithstanding a decrease in numbers of acres farmed since the war, the total amount produced has increased, which keeps the prices low. This increase is due in part at least to greater general productive efficiency. Farmers have been learning more about their business from the standpoint of production. They have been able to increase the quantity of what they have to sell by taking advantage of expert advice furnished by the federal Department of Agriculture and the various state experimental stations. They have learned how to feed more economically for the production of milk and of meat. They have improved the quality of their stock. They have tended to plant crops that will bring a greater yield than those they formerly planted. They have substituted to a large extent the tractor for the horses and mules that were formerly used, thus releasing for the growing of foodstuffs possibly twenty million acres of land, the equivalent of nearly 900 townships, that was formerly used for the growing of hay and oats. These great new amounts that they have learned how to produce they have been obliged to sell for less money than they would have received for a much smaller total production. They have received not only a smaller price per unit but a smaller total price than a general curtailment of production would have brought them.

Along with overproduction resulting in low prices, has come, especially in the years since the war, a great increase in costs. Taxes have become heavier and heavier, a part of the increase being due to increased costs of materials and of services which the various governmental units have all along been obliged to pay for, but a large part also being due to increased items of materials and service. Wages of hired labor have become higher as a partial response to rising wages in the cities. The total mortgage indebtedness upon which interest must be paid is considerably higher than it was before the war, the proportion of farms that are mortgaged being higher and the average amount of the mortgages being greater.

The unfavorable situation of agriculture due to the above factors is reflected in a decrease in land values and this in turn very naturally contributes to the discontent of farm owners. American agriculture until just recently has been characterized by rising values. Those who bought their farms at a low price could sell them at a considerably higher one; thus even though the annual incomes which the farmer received might have been pretty small, the profits made through real estate speculation made the venture as a whole seem to be a successful one. Farm owners of the present day cannot look ahead at all hopefully toward this source of gain, this being especially true of those who bought during the wartime years of peak prices. It may be a good thing for the industry as such that hope for gain must be based in the future more completely upon technical efficiency than it has been in the past and less upon the chance to profit through a fortunate real estate transaction. However that may be, falling land values are indicative of decreasing attractiveness of the occupation to those who are now owners of farm land. The inability of farmers, middle-aged and older, to dispose of their farms as advantageously as was possible in the prewar days prevents their retirement in such large numbers as in those earlier days. They cannot sell for what they consider high prices, and they cannot afford to sell for low because they would be unable to live on the proceeds; thus the average age of those actively engaged in the industry is gradually becoming higher.

While urban industry and agriculture are parts of the same cooperative system, the nature of agriculture as traditionally conducted prevents the farmer from adjusting himself in a highly efficient way to the total scheme of things. Attention has been called to certain factors that have contributed to the present situation of especially marked maladjustment. There are, however, certain characteristic differences of the agricultural industry as compared with urban industry which make for what seems to be a permanent condition of maladjustment. It is of course conceivable that large-scale operation, with the industry declared a public utility and with adequate returns guaranteed by the government, might

force an adjustment that would in many ways be more efficient than that which now exists. Such a transition as this would involve, however, would be most unwelcome to many people; and because this is the case, there is no immediate prospect of its being brought about. The farming people themselves would oppose it because it would mean the elimination of the traditional farmer type and the overthrow of what is referred to as a distinctive rural civilization; those who profit from the relatively low prices of farm products which characterize the present relation between agriculture and urban industry would also quite naturally oppose the change.

Certain of the characteristic differences of the agricultural industry are the following:

1. Individualism upon the part of the operators is perpetuated. More than six million independent farm operators are managing their small farms in their own way, taking their individual gains and losses just as they chance to come. Set down in a world of organized teamwork, the independent, unorganized farmer is at a great disadvantage. While certain favorably situated or favorably endowed individuals are able to achieve high success in the industry, and while many others, owing to an occasional fortunate combination of circumstances, have their good years, the economic situation of most of these independent farmers is most of the time unfavorable. Each independent farmer has a personal incentive to manage his business in a way that is harmful to the industry as a whole. If curtailment of production is felt to be a wise policy for the whole industry, it is still to the individual farmer's advantage to have a bountiful harvest. The more food he is able to raise in a given year and put upon the market, the more he accomplishes, in his small way, a reduction in the prices which other farmers receive. The more successful other farmers may be in raising large crops, the lower the prices he will receive. The only reason the comparatively small number of highly prosperous farmers are able to be prosperous is because the great majority are unable to do as well. If every farmer should succeed in making two blades of grass grow where one grew before, the condition of all farmers would become intolerable.

It is easy to say that farmers should learn to cooperate and much has been accomplished in the way of organization of cooperative enterprises, which have to do, however, mainly with distribution rather than with production. The traditional type of American farmer, however, is noncooperative in attitude. One of the chief reasons for his becoming a farmer or remaining one is the independent mode of life characterizing the occupation. If the individual farmer becomes thoroughly cooperative in point of view, he is quite likely to leave the occupation for some other in which the cooperative spirit is more completely manifest. Rugged individualism and the spirit of cooperation obviously do not go

together; and the family-farm system tends to accentuate the development of the former rather than the latter.

2. The second way in which agriculture differs largely from urban industry consists in the uncertainty of output which characterizes the former. The forces of nature, which are highly variable and only to a small extent under the control of man, result in extreme variability in crop yield. One cold night or one unusually heavy rain or one protracted period without rain or one unexpected and sudden arrival of some insect pest or one epidemic of some animal disease may prove almost crushingly disastrous to the individual farmer. While he is traditionally prepared to take his losses along with his gains, if his gains are generally small, owing to a chronic state of overproduction in the industry as a whole, and if he must occasionally experience severe loss, owing to local unfavorable weather or other natural conditions, his economic situation, on account of these factors, is unenviable.

The output for the industry as a whole is much more predictable for any one season than is that of the individual farmer. The geographical distribution of the acreage devoted to most of the crops is so great that the effect of local weather conditions on the whole crop is largely lost. Certain large-scale organizations have taken advantage of that fact in planning the distribution of their various holdings in such a way that variable local conditions serve as an insurance against complete crop failure. In other words they have not "put all their eggs in one basket" but have to a certain extent decreased the elements of chance in their business. Without doubt the chance element in agriculture has a certain appeal to many individuals who are engaged in it. There is something essentially primitive, however, in a system in which man is to such a large extent the plaything of natural phenomena. Civilization may be thought of as an organization of life for the purpose of protecting the individual from the effects of natural forces to the end that human will may more completely achieve its purposes. While it is true that no one is ever completely shielded from the whimsical power of nature, there can be no question but that the operator of a small farm bears a greatly disproportionate share of its direct effects. The application of the best scientific knowledge available to the work of the farm does something towards the substitution of human regularity and definiteness for the capriciousness characteristic of the more completely natural *réqime.* Most farmers, however, are not qualified by either natural capacity or training to take full advantage of the best that modern science has to offer—which is not to say that they are necessarily inferior to most other people in this regard.

3. As compared with urban industry, the period of production in agriculture is exceedingly long. The making of an automobile is but a short process of days or hours, while the making of a crop of wheat requires

a year and the production of beef and of apples requires a still longer period. This difference is of importance in at least two respects. In the first place, the turnover is so rapid in industry and in trade that those who are responsible for the processes involved may learn much from their previous mistakes and thus develop a higher degree of efficiency than if they were obliged to wait longer for their errors to come to light. In the second place, the manufacturer of automobiles knows how great the demand is for each car before he begins to make it. He knows how much it will sell for before it is made. He knows his production costs to the fraction of a cent and therefore knows whether he can afford to produce it.

The production of potatoes or of pork is attended by uncertainty all the way. The time of sale comes so long after the decision must be made whether or not to produce any given agricultural commodity that the farmer is working very largely in the dark. In addition to the uncertainty as to how the forces of nature will affect the quantity and quality of his crop yield, there is uncertainty regarding various factors that enter to influence the profitableness of his venture. He has no way of knowing how much need the consuming public will have for his products a year or more in advance. At the time he plants his potatoes in the spring, he is not certain that the demand for potatoes in the fall will be great enough to make it worth his while to harvest his crop and transport it to market. Thus he is very much a puppet in the hands of forces that operate on him almost as unpredictably and as uncontrollably as do the forces of nature. Some producers are much more successful in "guessing" market conditions a long time in advance than are others. There is no scientific method, however, by which even the best-informed farmers may know to a certainty before a given crop is planted what the conditions of supply and demand for that commodity will be at the time of harvest.

4. The prices of farm produce tend to vary much more than do those of the products of urban industry. This is in part due to the great variability characterizing the conditions of supply. Conditions of demand, however, are also influential in this matter. The demand for articles of food and other necessities of life is spoken of by economists as being more inelastic than the demand for articles that one may more readily do without. Prices of luxuries tend to be relatively stable, because demand for them is so elastic that it reacts very sensitively to a change in price. If the price drops a bit below its accustomed level, new buyers immediately appear, making an increased demand which tends to bring the price back to somewhere near its former level. Conversely, if the price is raised a bit, many who were about to buy refrain, making a decreased demand, thus pulling the price back to its level. The demand for jewelry and automobiles and radio sets is said to be relatively elastic. The demand for bread and potatoes, upon the other hand, is almost

completely insensitive to changes in price. A 10 per cent variation from normal supply, either above or below, would be expected to result in the variation of retail prices of more than 10 per cent. The price which the farmer gets varies still more. The upshot of the matter is that if a farmer chances to have a good crop in a season of general shortage he is indeed fortunate, while if, upon the other hand, owing to local conditions, he has a poor crop in a season of general surplus, he is just as surely unfortunate. Further, the individual farmer has relatively little power in the premises to determine whether his year is to be a good one financially or not.

5. The cost of labor in agriculture is relatively very much lower than it is in urban industry. This being the case, there is relatively little possibility of the farmer's effecting economies as regards that item in a time of oversupply and low prices. The automobile manufacturer can lay off his labor force either entirely or in part during the period of slackened demand for his products and wait for the demand to come back again, thus greatly reducing in the meanwhile his expense account. The typical farmer, depending almost entirely on his own labor and that of his family, has no such way of reducing his costs in a period of agricultural depression. The land is there in any case whether he tills it or not, and it is by far the most important element among his factors of production. The farmer may, of course, find it feasible and profitable to abandon his land temporarily and get work elsewhere. Many have resorted to this expedient during the last few years.

6. In agriculture, submarginal producers are not eliminated with the swiftness and despatch that are to be taken for granted elsewhere in industry. The marginal producer, we are told by the economists, is one whose costs of production and the amount received from sales are equal. He experiences neither profit nor loss but just breaks even. Prices tend to equal the costs of this marginal producer in the case of a commodity produced under competitive conditions. Producers whose costs of production are lower than those of a man at the margin make a profit. Those whose costs are higher than his incur a loss. These losing, or submarginal, producers are quite quickly eliminated from the industry. Producers must realize enough from their sales to pay for the raw material that they use, to pay their rent and interest charges, to pay the wages of the laborers that they employ, or else they are said to have failed in that particular business. They then turn to some other activity in which they are likely to be successful. Producers simply cannot continue to sell their products for less than costs.

In agriculture, the situation is quite different. Producers of farm products may continue almost indefinitely to sell their produce for less than cost. The farmer may make a living for himself and family, according to their accustomed standards, and finish the year with as

much money in the bank as he had at the beginning and still have suffered loss. Even with no brighter outlook for the future, he may repeat the process the following year and keep this up for year after year and feel no compelling pressure to leave the occupation.

Losses are sustained possibly in the depletion of the soil fertility of his land and in the depreciation of his buildings and equipment. Possibly also the quality of his livestock is deteriorating. Quite surely he and his wife have given to the enterprise an amount of labor energy for which they have received no adequate return when the situation in the general labor market is considered. It may be, too, that one or more children have put the best that they had in them into the family undertaking and have come out at the end of the year with nothing to show for it but a year's additional experience and the satisfaction, possibly, of having proved their loyalty to their parents.

Some of the reasons for the continuance of submarginal producers in the agricultural industry are the following:

1. A good share of these farmers do not know that they are producing at a loss. Many of them never consider their industry from the profit and loss standpoint. In other words, they are not business men. They are merely working much as their parents and grandparents worked and making for themselves a living of the same general sort as their parents and grandparents obtained with very likely some additional luxuries if they feel that they can afford them, and that is all there is to it. They begin their thinking not in terms of individual selves that are entitled to whatever measure of expression they may be able to secure in a larger social order, nor in terms of a reasonable standard of living that they should be able to achieve—if not on a farm, then elsewhere—but in terms of a farm home. If they manage to keep that home free of mortgage indebtedness, they may live out their lives there, with possibly only an occasional year in which they do not belong in the class of submarginal producers. If they lose their farms by the mortgage route, they are affected very differently from the usual business man who experiences failure. It is their home that has been taken from them. A real part of their lives has gone, leaving a crushing weight of dismay and humiliation.

2. A spirit of hope keeps many submarginal producers in the industry, even after many years of admitted failure. Conditions are extremely variable. They know of the successes made by certain men. Every spring they start the new year hoping for a good season, possibly trying new experiments and studying to effect new economies. Certain individuals succeed in lifting themselves out of the group of those who experience nothing but failure. Others merely hope and experiment, never getting as much for what they have to sell as has gone into the product in the way of soil fertility and human energy.

3. Inability, either real or imagined, to leave the farm for another occupation keeps many farmers drudging away at the only job they know. Their lives are marked by failure and despair. Some of these men and their families are of such low intelligence that they would be at the bottom of any group with which they might be associated. Others might have been at least fairly successful in some other occupation. Still others are merely unfortunate enough to own such poor land that no one could succeed with it and, at the same time, to be possessed of natures so lacking in the right sort of initiative that they are unable to abandon the attempt and give themselves a new start on better land or in a different occupation.

When a retail grocer fails, his store too is likely to be withdrawn from the field of competition. Both groceryman and grocery, as such, are eliminated. A new man rents the building and attempts to make a success in the business of selling drugs, possibly, or shoes. When the farmer fails in his business, he is more than likely not to be eliminated and, in case he *does* leave the occupation, the farm still remains a farm. Another family is quite sure to take possession of the place and keep the land in use producing surplus foodstuffs. The second family may be more successful than the first, and again it may not be. The chief fact to remember is that in view of the present demand for farm products in America, there are too many farms and too many farmers. Competition does not eliminate submarginal farms and submarginal farmers as it does submarginal grocery stores and submarginal grocerymen. A great deal may be said for the view which has been advanced by some that the federal government should take the submarginal land out of use for farms. This matter will be discussed more fully in another connection.

The economic and social consequences of the continued existence of submarginal farms should be readily apparent. Whether a farm is submarginal because of its own intrinsic deficiencies or because of faulty handling on the part of the operator, the result is the same. The family on that farm is playing a losing economic game with life. The industry as a whole also suffers because of the continuance in the field of competition of that failing unit. Farmers who have good ability or good land or both, and who should be enjoying a full measure of prosperity as reward for their efforts, are handicapped and are having their prosperity decreased by the continued presence in the industry of the less fertile farms and the less efficient farmers. The margin is dragged down lower than it would otherwise be. The whole industry is cheapened and degraded because there is no ready machinery either within the competitive process or outside of it to make for the elimination of the misfit farms and farmers.

Governmental policy has been instrumental in subordinating agriculture to industry in America. To say this is not necessarily to imply that leaders in the government have at any time deliberately set out to exploit

the farming people in the interests of urban business. Rights are recognized in American democracy just about in proportion to the pressure that different groups can bring to bear on governmental agencies in demand of those rights. Industrial leaders have wished a protective tariff in order that they might sell their products to the home consumer at a higher price than they could otherwise receive. These leaders have been able to get what they wanted. Other groups have not fared so well. Thus the government of the United States is preeminently a business man's government.

Since farmers very largely have not thought in terms of profits, they naturally have been in no frame of mind generally to compete with business men for the use of the government to aid them in getting profits. Farmers have desired cheap land, upon which they might establish homes. This the government provided while it was available. But the giving of the land was of at least as much advantage to industry as to the farmers. While it meant homes to the farmers, to industry it meant cheap food, an important fact in the production of profits.

Those farmers who have thought of themselves as business men and have stressed the desire for profits have quite largely supported the protective policy. They have believed—as they have been told, without doubt in all sincerity, by the spokesman for industry—that their interests were served best through this policy. The argument has been that protection means increased demand for raw materials, therefore higher prices for them; also that it means higher wages and increased purchasing power for laborers who would thus be in the position to buy more from the farmers and buy at higher prices. This would have worked not at all badly for the American farmers if they had been less numerous and better organized. If the supply of farm products could have been controlled and restricted as has been the supply of manufactured products, if agriculture had expanded only as rapidly as was needed to supply the home market at prices high enough to spell a profit for the producer with the opportunity of selling any chance surplus abroad for what it would bring—a lower price than that paid by the American consumer—then agriculture would have profited as fully from the protective policy as has industry. If all classes are protected equally, however, then no class is protected, and there is no advantage for anyone in a protective tariff.

America has gone the protective-tariff way. Partly as a result of this program the country has experienced a very rapid material development; natural resources of all sorts have been ruthlessly exploited; a relatively large group of men who have thought in terms of profits have become millionaires; farmers, who either have not thought in terms of profits or have been in no position to make such thinking effective, have been led to place a higher value on the things they *could* possess. Whether

or not it has been a personal advantage to the farmer for him to stress the ideals which he has been led to stress may be questioned; there can be no question, however, that it has been a great advantage to business.

Some Present Tendencies

The Tendency toward Mechanization.—One of the most noteworthy tendencies in American agriculture during recent years is the tendency toward increased use of machinery to aid in the performance of the physical work on farms. Labor on the farm because of the very nature of the processes involved can perhaps never be so completely carried on by mechanical means as is labor in most industries at the present time. The great variety of tasks to be performed and the small part that each of the tasks makes up of the total work done would seem to prevent anything like 100 per cent mechanization. The farmer who has many machines has a considerable amount of capital tied up in them, much of it being in actual use only a very small part of the year. In other words, such a farmer's overhead is very high. Agriculture in America at present has more power available for each worker than has any manufacturing industry; but less power is used per worker in agriculture than in any other industry in the country.[1] While a machine that is in use only a few minutes each day or a few days or weeks each year may save enough manual effort to constitute itself a profitable investment, it is obvious that more continuous use of the mechanical units available is to be desired.

In the first half of the last century, almost everything was done by hand, with horses used for drawing the plow and wagon. The hoe, the scythe, the sickle, and later the grain cradle, the flail, the shovel, the spade, and the pitchfork were the more important tools of which the farmer made use. After the middle of the century, horse-drawn implements of various sorts came rapidly into general use. Among these some of the more important were the mowing machine for harvesting hay, the reaper for wheat, oats, and other small grains, later supplanted by the self-binder, and still later came the corn harvester. Steam traction engines came into use to furnish power for threshing small grains. During all of this period, the amount of hand labor required in conjunction with the horse-drawn implements was very great.

The gasoline tractor, the most important of recent additions to the farmer's mechanical equipment, came into use during the first years of the present century. During the World War, with the shortage of agricultural labor involved, it was brought into much more general use. "From that time (1917) forward, this implement, together with a number

[1] U. S. Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Service Department, *The Mechanization of Agriculture*, Washington, D. C., 1927.

of innovations in tillage and harvesting machinery, has exerted an almost revolutionary influence upon agricultural production methods."[1] In 1925, according to the agriculture census, there were 506,000 tractors on farms in the United States. It was estimated that there were 853,000 on farms in 1929, an increase of 347,000 during the four years. According to this unofficial estimate, Illinois led all of the states in 1929 with about 70,000 tractors in use, with Iowa in second place having a total of about 60,000. Ohio, Wisconsin, California, Kansas, New York, Minnesota, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Michigan followed in the order named.[1]

The increasing use of the tractor has naturally made for a decrease in use of horses and mules on the farms in America. While in round numbers there were twenty-five million of these work animals on the farms in 1920, there were only twenty-two million in 1925, and nineteen million in 1929. The land formerly needed upon which to raise hay and oats to feed the horses may be utilized for cash crops, a portion of the proceeds of which must be spent for gasoline and oil with which to supply the tractors.

The tractor, being able to travel more rapidly and more nearly continuously than teams of horses and at the same time to pull larger machines than can four horses, is able to accomplish a great deal more in a given time than may be done with horses or mules provided the conditions are suitable for its use. It is a less flexible power unit, however, than are teams of work animals and thus not well adapted for all kinds of work. Under ideal conditions it has been estimated that the cost of field work is reduced by one-half through changing from horses to tractors. Many farms with tractors, however, have not disposed of an equivalent number of horses and therefore are not deriving such economic advantage as they might.

One of the more important advantages of the tractor over horses lies in the fact that it may work continuously. When a rush job is to be performed, it may be kept in use for 24 hours a day should this be desired. Another advantage consists in the fact that it requires no attention when not in use. It is fed only when it works instead of all the time as are horses.

The "combine," or combination harvester-thresher, has revolutionized the processes of harvesting and threshing of wheat and other small grains wherever it is in use. Two men operating a combine are able to cut and thresh more than twice as many acres of wheat in a day than they could merely cut and shock with a binder. Obviously this machine, however, can be used economically only on large farms. The Pacific Coast states have such farms and have made use of the combine for several years. Since the war, its use has increased rapidly in Kansas and neighboring states. According to the Kansas Agricultural Experi-

[1] *Ibid.*

ment Station, the use of the combine is justified economically if the acreage of grain to be handled is 200 or more.

Mechanical corn pickers are coming into use in those areas where the corn is husked from the standing stalk. Various types of machines for picking cotton are also coming onto the market. The so-called cotton "sled," through the use of which the bolls are stripped off the stalk, has been in use for some years in Texas and Oklahoma. This stripping process produces an inferior grade of cotton but at a much lower cost than hand picking. A tremendous amount of hand labor will obviously be saved if the use of the mechanical picker becomes general.

These mechanical devices which have just been mentioned are only a few of the many which have recently been coming into use to save manual effort and labor cost in the production of agricultural commodities. A great revolution is on in the American agricultural industry, which is bound to result in readjustments in various directions, the exact nature of which cannot be predicted with assurance.

Size of Farms.—It may be supposed that the coming of increased mechanization will result in farms becoming larger. One may imagine two farmers living side by side whose holdings are in each case too small to make possible an economical use of some of the new machines. One of these men wishes to sell his land. The other one is mechanically ambitious and wishes to enlarge his farm in order that it may be worthwhile for him to buy a tractor or a combine to aid him in his work. In such a case it would not be at all surprising if this second man should offer more for the farm that is to be sold than anyone else would care to pay. In case he does, we have one large farm taking the place of two small ones, and the average size of farms has thus been increased in that community. Quite possibly at a later time, this man with a large farm will buy still more adjoining land or, perhaps, sell what he has to a neighboring farmer who is desirous of expanding his acreage.

There seems to be little reason to doubt that just such a development as that outlined above will take place quite generally in those areas best suited to the use of the larger and more expensive machines. Insufficient time has as yet elapsed since the introduction of some of these mechanical devices for the transition toward larger holdings to make much of an impression in the statistical tables. The period since the war has been an extremely abnormal one in agriculture too, furnishing little opportunity for one to judge what the tendency during the more nearly normal period will be. In the twenty-year period 1890–1910, the average size of farms in the United States showed an increase of only 1 acre, from 137 to 138. The next decade 1910–1920, the average increased by 10.2 acres, the average size of farms for the entire country in 1920 being 148.2 acres. Just how much of this increase was due to the impetus given agriculture by the war and how much to the influence

of mechanization is impossible to say. The greatly increased use of the tractor and certain other machines during the latter part of the decade was itself largely due to the war influence. From 1920 to 1925, the average size decreased about 3 acres, the decrease being shared by 39 of the 48 states, the average acreage per farm at the latter date being 145.1.

There is some reason to believe that the decrease in average acreage from 1920 to 1925 is to be interpreted as due to the general condition of reaction to the period of wartime stimulation. Certain permanent factors throw their influence in the direction of smaller farms. If mechanization is to be considered an influence during normal times in the direction of larger farms, there is reason for its being of little force during the period under consideration—of insufficient force to offset the permanent influences tending to decrease the average size of farms. One of these latter influences is the breaking up of farms to satisfy the claims of heirs. A still more important one very likely is the development of small truck farms near large cities. There has also, in the last few years, owing to the influence of new means of communication and transportation, been a considerable movement of urban workers to homes in the open country. While most of these people quite surely do not think of the plots of ground upon which they live as farms, they are so considered by the Census Bureau if they contain 3 acres. It seems to be pretty safe to believe that for those people who take the occupation of farming seriously as a business and who live in regions well suited to the operation of large and powerful agricultural machinery, the tendency will be toward the tilling of larger and larger units of land, the size of these units being dependent upon the capacity of the machines. The family-farm obviously cannot become larger than a single family can administer. Just how large this may be depends upon many factors, including the character of the topography, the type of crops that are produced, the sort of machinery that is available, and the ambition and ability of the family members.

Social Effect of Increased Mechanization in Agriculture.—The coming of machinery to the farm brings with it certain possibilities other than the partial relief from back-breaking toil, the tendencies toward the increased size of farms, and the substitution of better-paying crops for those that pay less well. Among these may be mentioned the following:

1. There is the possibility of remaking the farm population through instituting a new basis of selection. Just how this will work out no one can foresee. It has been quite generally believed that farm-born boys who are mechanically inclined have in the past tended to leave the farms for the cities where they might have opportunity to give fuller expression to their inclinations than was possible on the old-time farm. It seems quite reasonable to believe that modern farm machinery may

tend to hold the more mechanically ingenious young men on the land, driving away those who do not like machines.

It does not do at all to assume, as some have apparently done, that farmers in general respond with pleasure to the coming of the machine. The man with a machine is not necessarily finding more pleasure in life than the man with the hoe. The country has been idealized as a place of peace and quiet compared with the city and its whirling wheels and jarring, grinding mechanical contrivances. Now the machine is coming to the country—just as complicated and noisy and greasy, and more dangerous to life and limb than most machines in urban factories. Progress in the agricultural industry demands that the machine shall come. It will draw to itself supposedly the sort of men who at least have no distaste for contact with it, sending others into lines of production in which machinery is of less use or to some of the quieter occupations of the cities.

2. It is certain that those who enter the occupation of farming and set themselves the program of a large use of modern farm machinery must take a more positive attitude toward the industry than has generally existed in the past. One cannot so readily drift into the occupation, as many have done, if farming in the future is generally going to require the purchase and maintenance of a considerable amount of expensive mechanical equipment. For the same reason, the occupation will become difficult to get out of without making a much greater financial sacrifice than has generally been involved in the past. In other words, a highly mechanized agriculture is bound to be taken more seriously by both those who are on farms and those who are not.

3. It may be, as has been said, that when the farmer becomes a mechanic he takes on a higher social rating than has formerly been given him. It is quite easy, however, to argue otherwise. The fairly successful farmer of the past had a certain dignity all his own. He simply could not be compared with men of the city. They for the most part ignored him, but when he came to their attention they were forced to give him credit for being in his own way a successful man. When he becomes the operator of various machines, he brings himself into comparison with urban mechanics, and it stands to reason that his rating will depend pretty largely upon his efficiency. Unless he actually enjoys working with his machines and is truly ingenious in a mechanical way, the coming of the machine to his farm will not have enhanced his prestige or, very likely, his self-esteem.

4. Decreasing contact with the soil and increasing contact with the machine will change the farmer's appearance in the direction of a closer resemblance to the urban machinist. The washing of her husband's and son's work clothes has been one of the most disagreeable tasks of many farm women. It is not probable that the shift to the machine is lightening that task for her.

5. In those cases where the machine completely supplants the horse, there are fewer chores to be done at morning, noon, and night. The extra time may be used in either one of two ways. The farmer may shorten his day's work, as many of them undoubtedly will do, devoting more time to leisure. He may, upon the other hand, lengthen his day in the field. There will be no need to stop, as those with horses must, to allow the animals to rest. With no horses which have the need to rest, as on the non-mechanized farm, and no need to observe regular hours of labor, as in the city, ambitious farm operators are likely to prolong their hours of labor in rush seasons, in some cases instituting a night shift, as has already been done on some farms for certain short periods.

The Tendency toward Cooperation.—In addition to the tendency toward mechanization with its many possible consequences, some of which have been briefly considered, there is also a tendency toward increased cooperation among farmers. Mechanization involves a change in the farmer's relation to his land and the processes of production; cooperation involves a change in his relations toward his neighbors and other members of the occupation—also toward the market.

The purpose of the existence of cooperative organizations among the farmers is to enable their members to market what they have to sell or to buy things that they wish to purchase more advantageously than would otherwise be possible. Many such organizations have been developed in America during the last five or six decades. Most of those that were formed in the early years of the movement, for one reason or another, proved to be unsuccessful. A really small number succeeded very well. During the past fifteen years great advances have been made in this field, both in the way of increased numbers and in that of the development of increased stability. Apparently, American agricultural marketing will more and more be done through cooperatives. This will surely be the case if the federal government continues its present policy of encouragement, both financial and otherwise.

The period between 1915 and 1925 was one of rapid growth in the cooperative movement. In the first of these two years, 5,424 cooperative associations, engaged either in marketing produce or in purchasing supplies, were reported to the Federal Department of Agriculture. These associations had about 650,000 members, and the business done amounted to $636,000,000. In 1925, there were about 11,000 associations, with more than 2,000,000 members, and doing a business which totaled $2,440,000,000. While the number of associations just about doubled during the period, the number of members more than tripled, and the amount of business done almost multiplied itself by four during the same time.[1] Since 1925, the expansion has been at a much slower rate than it

[1] Tenny, Lloyd S., "Recent Trends among Cooperatives in the United States," *Rural America*, March, 1928.

was in the ten-year period preceding that date. In 1928, the total number of members remained about the same as it was in 1925, the number of cooperatives had increased to 12,000, and the amount of business done totaled about $2,500,000,000, about 80 per cent of which consisted of sales and the remainder of purchases.[1]

Despite the slow tangible growth of the past few years, it is considered by many who are closely in touch with the movement that these years have been characterized by very real progress along lines that do not show themselves in statistical tables. The ideals dominating the organizations are being planted upon a more substantial basis of knowledge. Members are in general becoming more intelligently related to their organizations than was the case in an earlier day, knowing more fully the precise nature of the benefits they may reasonably expect to receive. Management is being made more efficient. Programs are being elaborated to give the membership more nearly the maximum amount of aid that may be received through such agencies.

Most of the cooperative marketing associations have to do with single or very closely related commodities. Somewhat over 30 per cent of the total are handling grain; those having to do with milk and other dairy products are next most numerous, comprising more than 20 per cent of the total number. Thus organizations concerned with grain and dairy products comprise more than half of the total number. It is said that about 20 per cent of all the fluid milk consumed by households in the United States is handled by cooperatives. Organizations for the purpose of marketing livestock are third most numerous; and those having to do with fruits and vegetables are fourth in the list. Of this last-mentioned group, the California Fruit Growers Exchange, doing an annual business of nearly $100,000,000, is one of the best organized and most successful of all cooperative enterprises. Among the more important of other commodities sold cooperatively are cotton, tobacco, wool, poultry and its products, and nuts.

While something less than one-third of all American farmers are members of at least one cooperative organization—some belonging to as many as five—this great membership is not at all evenly distributed throughout the country. Certain areas are much more completely organized than others. Among the states standing highest in the list are California, North Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, and New York. About half the entire membership of cooperatives live in these ten states, and more than 50 per cent of all the cooperative marketing in America is handled by their organizations.

Professor John D. Black mentions some eight possible gains to be achieved for the farmer through the operation of a marketing system

[1] Black, John D., *Agricultural Reform in the United States*, p. 341, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1929.

which begins with small local cooperative units and extends itself through consolidation into large central organizations.[1]

1. One important possible gain consists in the stabilizing of the production period. This could be brought about through a careful study of changes in demand and a cooperative effort to adjust production to these changes. Success in such an effort would obviously require that a large part of the production of the given commodity should be under cooperative control and that members should be loyal to their organizations. While the greatest potential gain of all is to be found here, Professor Black considers that there is very little reason to hope for much actual achievement in this field in the immediate future.

2. A large-scale central organization should be able to improve the local units in various ways, aiding in the development of more efficient management and organization. Important gains may be made here much more rapidly than in the more ambitious project of something like satisfactory stabilization of production period.

3. The quality of production may be improved. Supposedly the farmer who is a member of a cooperative group is given a greater incentive to produce a high quality product than he would otherwise have. The organization also should be able to aid the farmer in various ways in the direction of improvement of quality.

4. The central organization may be able to time the movement of the produce to market in such a way as to secure the best prices. The individual farmer is quite frequently unable to hold his wheat or other commodity until just the right time to sell even should he understand market conditions well enough to know what would be the most profitable course to pursue.

5. "Better sorting and grading" should be possible through cooperative organization. This should be of great advantage to those producers who are successful in raising produce of good quality.

6. "Better distribution between markets" should be possible for a large central organization than for individual farmers acting alone, or within merely small local units.

7. "Advertising, especially advertising of an extra large crop, and by developing new markets" should be possible for a large central organization.

8. "Securing equality or better in the matter of bargaining, and taking away from buyers any possible monopoly advantage they now enjoy." The potential gain along this line Professor Black considers to be smaller than that to be derived in the case of any other of the possibilities mentioned. It is the sort of gain that many farmers have first in mind when they contemplate joining a cooperative. They have a

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 344.

feeling that they may through organization fix prices much as certain urban industries do which produce under monopoly conditions.

Professor Black enumerated these eight possible sources of gain in the order given in 1924, with the state of Minnesota especially in mind. He thought at that time that "the probable gain to producers and consumers in the next ten years from these eight sources will probably range for the various Minnesota products from less than 2 to more than 10 per cent, with an average of less than 5 per cent."[1] Writing in 1929, he reported that his predictions had been "too optimistic."

It seems safe to say that the increasing tendency among American farmers towards business cooperation is a soundly progressive tendency. It must be thought of in long-time terms, in terms of decades and centuries rather than in those of single years, with hopes for large profits. If much of real benefit to American agriculture is to be achieved through this means, it must come through the development of a cooperative spirit that has built itself into important traditions that are passed down from father to son. To some authors who write on the subject the chief gains to be hoped for from cooperative activity are social and spiritual in nature rather than economic. They see such a standing together of farmer with farmer, shoulder to shoulder, through the generations that a fine and distinctive rural civilization will result and be perpetuated.

The traditional individualism of the American farmer is an important obstacle to the development of a thoroughgoing cooperative *régime*, whatever the chief results of such a system are considered to be. Effective cooperation is dependent upon a period of thorough discipline for members. The American farmer has traditionally submitted to little in the way of discipline save to that of the family of which he is very really a part and that of nature whose will he must respect. More than two-thirds of the farm operators in America are still outside cooperative organizations in spite of the wide publicity that has been given the movement and the encouraging, and sometimes extravagant, claims that have been made for it. Many who are members maintain only a most casual relationship to their organizations. The possibilities exist for a devotion of almost religious intensity. Attitudes of this sort are sometimes met with in the case of Scandinavian immigrants and their children but very rarely do they characterize farmers whose ancestors have been in America for several generations. The Scandinavians and those from certain other Northern European countries have brought to the American farms a very different tradition from that which has developed in the older American stock, largely of English and Scotch-Irish descent. American traditions of individualism have prepared a great many farmers to take the "they" attitude toward their cooperatives rather than the "we" attitude which only can insure anything like a real success. Failure

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 345.

has resulted in many cases, because farmers who have profited in a "good" year have deserted their organization when matters began to go badly, indicating that their real selves were not identified with the venture.

Illustrative of the lack of interest taken by farmers in their own organizations may be mentioned a study made in the attitudes of 898 farmers in Virginia and Maryland who were members of the Eastern Shore Farmers Association. These men were interviewed in 1929 by representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture.[1]

Less than one-seventh of these members are said to have indicated any vital interest in the affairs of the organization. While the officials of the organization were responsible to the directors who were elected by the farmers, the farmers in general seemed to feel no reason for loyalty to those officials. During 1927 one-tenth of the members of the association violated their contracts and it is significant that violations were more frequent among the owners of large farms than among small farm owners and renters. The author remarks, "On the surface at least, it would appear that the traditional morals taught by community institutions have not been a great help in causing people to live up to their pledges." "His word as good as his bond" we sometimes say Neither is much good in the case of a man whose moral training has been of a narrow individualistic sort. Some owners of large farms are the completest sort of product of that type of training. Unless one through training and experience comes to share the life of a group larger than that of his immediate family, he is not likely to feel any inner compulsion to keep his promises made to members of that "outside" group.

A few members of the Eastern Shore Farmers Association made statements of their attitudes in phrases such as "help in every possible way," "cooperate fully with my organization plans," "100 per cent loyal and try to get others to join." A larger number, however, took the very opposite attitude as indicated by statements such as "patronize my organization only when I want to," "can now sell for the high dollar wherever offered," "no responsibility now as organization hasn't played fair."

Every year, intercounty jealousies are a basis for much complaining and of accusations of favoritism and partiality. Going to loading points in each of the counties during the course of a single day, it was found that groups of farmers were accusing one or more of their marketing organizations with favoring the other counties, "never their own," in the operations of that day. There appears to be far too little confidence in the integrity of the management in these matters, yet in 1928 the only such case observed by the field workers came about when a group of farmers at one loading point violated the rules by commandeering freight cars and loading them on embargo day. All reasonable measures were

[1] Manny, Theodore B., "What Farmers Say about Marketing," *Rural America*, June, 1929.

used to prevent this but to no avail. The farmers decided to load notwithstanding all orders to the contrary, and load they did. Some of them seemed to have the conviction that this sort of "revolt" was under way all over the area when in fact it was confined to the one point. The trouble was due entirely to the members; the management was doing all it possibly could to play fair with everyone. This difficulty seems to arise out of distrust and suspicions which, for lack of local evidence, are now directed to a more remote area. They serve as a safety valve for venting some dissatisfaction but at the same time constitute a dangerous factor in undermining loyalty and sowing seeds of dissension.

There is some ground for the belief that cooperative organization of farmers for business purposes will continue to grow in America, with occasional setbacks, until practically all farmers in the country are members of such organizations. One may imagine a condition which may exist at some future time in which the American farming class as a whole will control its own destiny as completely as does any body of producers through great federated cooperative systems having the sources of their vitality in the democracies of thoroughly alive and group-conscious local units. There is also good theoretical ground for being extremely skeptical.

The situation would be entirely different if those on farms were obliged to remain there or if the path to the city with its many occupations were much more completely obstructed than it is today and than it is likely to be tomorrow. Compared with rural people in general, the American farmer is extremely mobile. Young men who are sufficiently intelligent and sufficiently ambitious to make good use of farm cooperative organizations are likely also to be awake to opportunities existing elsewhere than in agriculture. This is certain to be the case with those whose years in school have given them a broad view of life. Those individuals, who are by nature and training sufficiently well fitted to get along successfully with other people to qualify them for efficient membership in agricultural cooperatives, are likely also to be well qualified for life elsewhere. If the rewards, both financial and otherwise, continue to be generally higher for men of this sort in occupations other than farming, there will continue to be a more or less steady draining away to the cities of young men whose social natures are best developed. The movement to the farms from the cities, made up largely of those born on farms, will be composed in the main of those who lack certain qualities essential for success in the urban environment, much the same qualities as are needed to make one the best type of member in a farm cooperative. In brief, the best development of farm cooperation requires a continued living together over a span of years of the same individuals and families. The situation in America is unfavorable in this regard. Furthermore, urban life for a long time to come is quite sure to attract a good share of the socially alert, while the less socially awakened and more non-coopera-

tive types are left on the farms. Propagandic programs are constantly being urged as a means to hold the "best blood" on the farms to furnish leadership of a rural civilization in its business aspects as well as in all other phases of community life. Such programs in this day of easy communication are impossible to make at all fully effective. Their application, whether or not effective, is just as much out of keeping as is any other program of propaganda in a society which pretends to be democratic.

Farm-relief Agitation

Soon after the ending of the war, the expression "farm relief" began to be heard in the land. The withdrawal of the artificial support which the government had given agriculture during the war as an emergency measure left the farming population in a most unsatisfactory economic position as compared with other occupational groups. The purchasing power of products which farmers had to sell fell far below its prewar relation to the purchasing power possessed by other groups. This maladjustment could be thought of from the point of view of the low prices of farm products or from that of the high prices of the things that the farmer wished to buy. As the farmer was selling in the world market, the prices he received were kept low. He had to sell his wheat and certain other important products in competition with agricultural producers the world over. The prices the farmer was forced to pay were kept high by the protective tariff. The provisions of the tariff applied also to certain commodities which the farmer sold, but, as he produced for export, the tariff was of relatively little use to him.

It was quite naturally felt that the farmer should be given the opportunity to buy and sell in the same kind of market: that either he should be allowed to buy his necessities and luxuries at prices not artificially heightened by the tariff, but at the low prices of the same world market in which he sold his wheat and cotton, or else he should be allowed to get high domestic prices for what he sold to the domestic consumer, prices on the same level as those received by the manufacturer. Farm relief then would consist in lowering his buying prices or raising his selling prices. The program most politically expedient because most in line with traditional American policy was one based on the conception of the farmer as producer rather than as consumer. The McNary-Haugen and export-debenture plans, both of which have been before Congress in varying forms, are farm-relief proposals, the intent of which is to place the farmer as a producer on the same footing with other American producers. The first McNary-Haugen bill was introduced on January 16, 1924, since which time the matter has been before Congress in some form or other almost continuously. Twice McNary-Haugen

bills have been passed by Congress, both times to be vetoed by President Coolidge, in 1927 and 1928. The export-debenture plan first appeared in Congress in the form of a bill in 1926. The attitudes of both President Coolidge and President Hoover have been as unsympathetic toward this plan as was that of the administration toward the McNary-Haugen plan.

In brief, the McNary-Haugen, or equalization-fee plan, would set up governmental machinery to allow the producers of certain specified agricultural commodities to receive a higher price from the domestic consumer than that paid by foreign consumers, as fixed by the current world-market situation. Producers would share the profits obtained through the higher domestic price, also the losses suffered through the low-price sales abroad. The export-debenture plan provides for the payment to exporters of specified farm exports of a bounty in the form of negotiable certificates known as "debentures." These debentures would be sold to importers who could use them in paying customs duties. The domestic prices of these commodities would obviously be increased by the amount of the bounty, unless the latter were higher than the tariff. Farmers would profit by these higher prices which the consumer would be obliged to pay. The government would be in effect paying the amount of the debentures issued, because its customs receipts would be diminished by that amount. If either of these plans had been enacted into law, the tariff would supposedly have become effective protection for farmers as it is already for other producers.

The reason of overwhelming importance for the failure of such plans as those outlined to be put into effect is the opposition of the business interests. Secretary Mellon, in an official letter of date June 25, 1926, wrote as follows:

> Foreign consumers under the proposed plan will secure American commodities at prices below the American level. European labor could purchase American products at a lower price and could live more cheaply than American labor. Foreign industrial costs would be lowered and the foreign competitor assisted in underselling American products abroad and in our home market.[1]

Secretary Mellon in this statement has without doubt very well implied the attitude of American business interests in regard to adequate farm relief. America, according to this way of looking at it, is primarily a business man's country. The function of the farmer in this scheme is to provide food and raw materials to the cities in such quantities that the prices will be sufficiently low to give American industry a cost of production low enough to compete on satisfactory terms with European manufacturers. Even if the farming people were fairly well united

[1] Black, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

politically in the attempt to equalize themselves economically with other groups in the nation, the chances are that they would not succeed. They are a minority group, and their numbers are both relatively and absolutely declining.

Just how much the living costs of city dwellers would be advanced should the farmer be allowed to receive high enough prices to mean adequate relief for him cannot be determined. Edward S. Mead, Professor of Finance in the University of Pennsylvania, estimates that if prices were raised high enough to give 6,500,000 farmers "living wages and a reasonable return on their investment" the cost of living would be advanced at least $6,000,000,000, about $50 per capita.[1] Even should the increase to the consumers be no more than a small fraction of the amount of this estimate, it is hardly to be expected that any large share of them would knowingly support a policy that would bring it about. The majority of American consumers are apparently of the opinion that a vote for a protective tariff for industry is a vote for prosperity. A protective tariff made effective for agriculture, however, would be entirely another matter—much more difficult to popularize.

There is grave danger that, if farm relief of the sort indicated were put into effect, it would work only temporarily. The need to be met would be that of caring for the surplus production of food and raw materials which depresses prices. It is possible that production would expand in response to heightened prices to such an extent that the surplus would become unmanageably large, in which case the machinery for handling it would break down, whereupon the farmer would be worse off than he is at present. Machinery for raising prices, in order to be of any real advantage, should be accompanied by other machinery to prevent expansion of the industry. It may be that the second of these two would be even more generally unpopular than the first. It would seem to represent a more complete break with American traditions than the other. Nothing would seem to be any more in harmony with American traditional thought and feeling than the idea that the unemployed and poverty-stricken of the cities should have the opportunity of going to work on the land to raise food for themselves and families. The sentiment back of the Homestead Law is based not merely on the desire for cheap food for factory laborers. There is also the feeling that a rich nation with all of its public lands not yet distributed should aid those individuals who are willing to accept that form of aid with gifts of the land. A prosperous agriculture would bring a great part of America's unused farm land, both actual and potential farm land, into use unless definite and strict precautions were taken to previt.

[1] Mead, E. S., and Bernard Ostralenk, *Harvey Baum, a Study of the Agricultural Revolution*, p. 124, H. Milford, Oxford University Press, London, 1928.

Farm Relief through Reducing the Amount of Land under Cultivation

It has been many times seriously advocated that the government should aid the farming industry by taking land out of use for farming purposes. If enough land were thus kept out of use, it would indirectly aid the producers still remaining in the industry by decreasing the supply of agricultural products and thus raising the prices.

First of all, it has been urged that the Department of the Interior should cease its program of reclamation. Through the activities of this department of the government, swamp lands are being drained and dry lands are being furnished water by irrigation, *unusable* lands continually being made *usable* and brought into use for farming purposes. It is sometimes said in defense of this policy that these new lands are so fertile that it is good national economy for them to be brought into use and substituted for old and worn-out lands. The obvious answer is that simply because new land comes into use, it does not necessarily follow that an area of land representing an equal amount of productive power will be withdrawn from cultivation and allowed to remain idle. While the annual amount of new land brought into cultivation is very small compared with the total amount being cultivated, it does contribute something toward the expansion of the industry, and at a time when the needs of the industry can be best served through contraction.

In addition to discontinuing its policy of bringing new farm land into being, it is suggested that the government should purchase some of the poorer land that is at the present time being farmed. This poor land could be bought at a low price and be made use of for forestry purposes. While a great deal of such land would need to be taken out of use to produce a marked effect upon agricultural prosperity, such a program, to however limited an extent it might be made use of, may be argued to be beneficial. Every bit of submarginal land permanently withdrawn from use for farming purposes would reduce by just that much the possibility of men and women wasting their economic lives in the attempt to eke out a living on it as farmers.

The same business considerations that would prevent the adoption of any other farm relief program, such as the McNary-Haugen plan, would undoubtedly prevent the adoption or wide application of a plan of relief through curtailment of the supply of farm land; and, as has been indicated, factors other than these would without doubt exert their influence against this plan.

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929

There is much diversity of opinion as to whether the Agricultural Marketing Act should or should not be discussed under the heading of

farm relief. The act is the administration substitute for the McNary-Haugen and the export-debenture plans generally supported by farming groups. President Hoover in his statement to the Federal Farm Board, created under the provisions of the Act, said, in part:

I am deeply impressed with the responsibilities which lie before you. Your fundamental purpose must be to determine the facts and to find solutions to a multitude of agricultural problems, among them to more nearly adjust production to need; to create permanent business institutions for marketing which, owned and controlled by the farmers, shall be so wisely devised and soundly founded and managed, that they by effecting economies and giving such stability will grow in strength over the years to come. Through these efforts we may establish to the farmer an equal opportunity in our economic system with other industry . . .

I know there is not a thinking farmer who does not realize that all this cannot be accomplished by a magic wand or an overnight action. Real institutions are not built that way. If we are to succeed it will be by strengthening the foundations and the initiative which we already have in farm organizations, and building steadily upon them with a constant thought that we are building not for the present only but for next year and the next decade.[1]

Section 5 of the Marketing Act enumerates the special powers of the Federal Farm Board as follows:

(1) To promote education in the principles and practices in cooperative marketing of agricultural commodities and food products thereof. (2) To encourage the organization, improvement in methods, and development of effective cooperative associations. (3) To keep advised from any available sources and make reports as to crop prices, experiences, prospects, supply and demand at home and abroad. (4) To investigate conditions of overproduction of agricultural commodities and advise as to the prevention of such overproduction. (5) To make investigations and reports and publish the same, including investigations and reports upon the following: land utilization for agricultural purposes; reduction of the acreage of unprofitable marginal lands in cultivation; methods of expanding markets at home and abroad for agricultural commodities and food products thereof; methods of developing by-products or new uses for agricultural commodities; and transportation conditions and their effect upon the marketing of agricultural commodities.

The sum of $500,000,000 is made available by the act for the use of the Farm Board as a revolving fund to be loaned to cooperative associations to aid them in realizing their proper purposes.

Certain statements made by Chairman Alexander Legge of the Farm Board in an address outlining the policies of the present board are as follows:

The Board believes that it can be of great assistance to the American farmers by encouraging the development of large-scale, central cooperative organizations.

[1] Farm Board, President Hoover's Statement to the Federal Farm Board, *Rural America*, September, 1929.

Such an agency would be in itself, because of its prestige and influence, a stabilizing element in marketing. It would be able to exert a measurable degree of control over the flow of its products to market. It would avoid temporary surpluses which so often result in unduly depressing the price of farm products much below their real value. In other words, it would be a strong merchandising agency, virtually in control of the conditions under which the products of its members are sold . . .

The Board will provide a contact between organized farmers and the government—even though they may not come to the Board for the purpose of obtaining loans. Any organized group may come to the Board at any time for counsel, advice and assistance in meeting their problems . . .

The major policy of the Board will be the expansion and strengthening of the cooperative movement . . .

If these cooperatives can be built up so that their strength and efficiency are recognized by those not now members, the question of extending membership very largely settles itself. In other words, it is inconceivable that any farmer would refrain from belonging to a cooperative organization, once he is convinced that it is operating in his interests . . .

The Board is considering this as a long-time constructive program rather than simply one of dealing with emergencies . . .

It (the Board) expects by aiding in the development of cooperative associations to make possible economies in marketing and stabilizing market conditions, and to assist farmers to obtain their just share of the national income.[1]

The attitudes toward the enactment of the Agricultural Marketing Act expressed by various leaders of organizations of farming people, rural sociologists, and editors of farm papers and journals vary all the way from enthusiastic pleasure that so much has been accomplished for the farmer to bitter disappointment that no "relief" whatever has been achieved. Apparently the feeling most generally held is that the thing accomplished is better than nothing and that it is likely to pave the way toward something better.

If the Act were to function perfectly through the Farm Board created by it, which of course is a bit too much to expect, it would accomplish the following things:

1. It would attract all the farmers in America into cooperative units in order that they might each receive all the benefit possible to be derived from the administration of the Act.

2. It would bring about unified control of the entire supply of each commodity to be put upon the market, thus making it impossible for individual producers to undersell the others.

3. It would give those representatives of the cooperatives responsible for selling a given commodity as advantageous a bargaining position as could be held by a single individual who had as large a part of the

[1] Legge, Alexander, "The Farm Board and the Cooperatives," *Rural America*, September, 1929. (From an address before the American Institute of Cooperation.)

total supply to dispose of—except that they would be unable, as provided by the Act, "to withhold any commodity from domestic market if the prices have been unduly enhanced resulting in distress to domestic consumers."

4. It would prevent undue expansion of the supply of particular commodities through a mobilization of public opinion against those who would tend to disregard the request of administratives to limit their acreages.

If the Act works well, it will accomplish much. It will, it may be hoped, bring about highly organized teamwork among the millions of independent producers, very greatly decreasing the disadvantages arising from a disorganization traditional in the industry. The disadvantages due to the general oversupply of agricultural products in America, on account of the excessive amount of land in farms, will apparently still remain after everything possible of accomplishment through the Marketing Act has been done. If this proves to be the case, agriculture will still be at an economic disadvantage when compared with industry and the demand for "relief" may be expected to continue.

CHAPTER VII

THE CORPORATION FARM

Some Facts Concerning Large-scale Farming Operations in the United States

In recent years the tendency toward large-scale agricultural operations under corporate ownership has increased somewhat. In 1918, 6,779 corporation farms made income-tax reports to the federal government. From that date to 1926 the increase in numbers of such farms was fairly steady, the number reporting in the latter year being 9,303. Thus during the eight-year period, the number increased by 2,524, an average gain of more than 300 a year. The total area of farm land so handled is as yet relatively small, but the tendency toward increase has awakened enough interest and discussion to justify the inclusion in a text of rural sociology of a chapter dealing with the matter. Rural sociologists seem to be fairly equally divided between two groups, one of which is of the opinion that agriculture in America will always be mainly an occupation of small units, family-owned and operated; the other of which doubts the indefinite continuance of the family-farm unit but deplores any tendency away from it. The soundest attitude to take would seem to be one of open-minded curiosity. There probably is nothing inevitable about a continued process of transformation from small-unit to large-unit operation in agriculture. Neither is it probably inevitable that, if large-scale farming operations become general, a cultural loss will result, as so many apparently fear. There are certain aspects of social advantage which might be expected to accompany such a change. These advantages might or might not be offset by equally important social disadvantages. Whether the change would be socially advantageous or not, industrial organization will certainly take over the business of agricultural production if it finds it sufficiently profitable to do so, just as it has taken over every other important line of production.

We are indebted to the Agriculture Service Department of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States for an excellent study recently made (published in 1929) of large-scale farming in America. Not all large-scale farms have the corporate form of organization. There is, however, a tendency for farms too large for single-family operation to take on the corporate form, just as there is a tendency for this form to prevail elsewhere with large-scale industrial undertakings. Of the 74

large-scale agricultural units studied in detail by the Chamber of Commerce, 35 are corporately owned, 13 are owned by partners, 25 by individuals, and 1 is operated by a United States government institution.

Some of the more interesting and significant facts brought to light by the Chamber of Commerce study are as follows:

1. The average net incomes of corporation farms are relatively very little higher than those of family-farms. On the average, the corporation farms are more than twenty times as large as the family-farms with which they are to be compared, while their average annual income for the six-year period just preceding 1924–1925 was only $1,051 as compared with $793 for all farms, as determined by the Department of Agriculture. These figures, however, are very far from being strictly comparable. Salaries and wages are taken into account when the net return of a corporation farm is calculated for income-tax purposes, while net income as understood by the Department of Agriculture includes what the operator receives for his services of labor and management. If the family-farm operator should subtract $603, the average wage paid for farm labor during the period under consideration, from the net income of $793, there would be left only $190. If he should subtract still further only $200, to be considered wages of management, he would find that he had been operating his farm at a loss, with no return whatever on his investment save the house rent and family fuel and food produced on the farm, which, as a matter of fact, should be thought of as more than paid for by the labor of wife and children. Thus there is a difference in favor of the corporation farm. While on the average, during the period under consideration, it was not a highly profitable undertaking, still there was actually a slight net income, which is more than could be said for the family-farm, were its accounts to be kept in the same way.

2. Of the 74 large-scale farms given special study, 23, or nearly one-third of the entire number, had been operated as such for 20 years or more, while 48 of the concerns had been in business for 10 years or longer. These figures indicate a fairly high degree of persistence of large-scale farms after they have once been established.

3. A wide variety of enterprises is conducted on these (74 farms). Comparatively few of them are one-crop farms, but a majority are more or less specialized in that they receive the bulk of their income from one or two classes of products. Ten of the farms receive their principal income from dairy products. Fifteen are fruit and vegetable farms, six are grain farms, and three cotton farms. Grain, hay, and live stock are the principal enterprises on thirteen farms. In the group are one truck-farm, one poultry farm, and one canning-crop farm. Twenty-two of the farms receive their income from sufficiently diverse sources to be considered under the heading of general farms.

4. Not all large-scale farms are especially large from the standpoint of acreage. While 52 of the farms contain 1,000 or more acres each, and 38

farm companies operated 2,000 acres or over, and the average acreage for the whole number reporting was over 11,000 acres, some of the farms were relatively small. The poultry farm contained but 84 acres, and 8 of the 10 dairy farms contained less than 1,000 acres each.

5. Less than half of the companies had their land in a single contiguous tract. The holdings of about two-thirds of them, however, were in single localities.

6. Of the 74 farms, only 19 are handled as single units. The remainder are divided into two or more units: in certain cases the single units being in charge of salaried managers; in the others, of tenants. In certain of those cases in which tenants are in charge, more or less detailed supervision is maintained by the central management; in others this is lacking, in which cases the income of the company is merely a landlord's rent rather than a manager's profit.

7. The salaries of paid managers, who have charge of the whole enterprise, run from $1,200 to $9,000 a year. Those of managers of independent units, in those cases in which farm enterprises are subdivided, run from $720 to $3,000. Certain of these latter men have only the responsibilities of foremen and are paid accordingly. In a good share of the cases, managers and foremen receive additional compensation in the form of house rent and farm produce.

8. Labor requirements on these farms vary with the type of commodity produced. Agriculture is a seasonal occupation; however it may be carried on, more help is needed in the summer and autumn periods than at other times. Of the 74 farms 4 employ 1,000 or more men each for a part of the year; 15 of them employ 100 or more.

9. Of the 74 farms 32 hire native white laborers; 7 hire negro laborers almost entirely. Various European nationalities, in addition to Mexicans, Japanese, and Indians, are represented on the other farms.

10. Wages for labor vary with the section of country and the type of work. Machine operators are paid more than others, and those performing the heaviest manual labor receive somewhat more than those who are less strenuously employed. "The average wage rates paid by all of the farms reporting on this item are $3.12 per day and $65 per month."

11. Most of these farms are completely mechanized, all but 12 having tractors and all but 14 having motor trucks. Several of these implements are to be found on most of the farms where they are being employed at all, one farm having 65 tractors, and another having 43 motor trucks. While but 6 of the 74 farms produce grain almost exclusively, 16 report the possession of "combines," one farm having 14 of them.

Economic Advantages of Large-scale Farming

It seems reasonable to suppose that there are economies in the large-scale operation of the business of agricultural production, just as there

are in the production of other economic goods. Most of the managers of the seventy-four farms above considered reported that there are such economies.

1. The greatest economy of all, in the opinion of these managers, comes from the buying and selling in large quantities. In a modern world accustomed to thinking in terms of large units, the large farm takes its place. It can produce and sell thousands of bales of cotton, hundreds of thousands of bushels of wheat or other grain, hundreds of carloads of fruit or vegetables. The manager of such a farm is able to meet the business men of the city on something like an equal footing. He is able to step right over the heads of the middlemen, who do a profitable business with the produce which the small farmer sells, and sell direct to terminal-market commission agents or wholesalers. Forty-one of the seventy-four farms do this. Farm cooperatives do this same thing to a certain extent for the small farmers. One might imagine a situation in which there was such a perfect condition of teamwork among all of the farmers in America that they might benefit to the maximum extent from their united effort in buying supplies and marketing produce. Cooperatives as they actually function, however, made up so largely of individualistic, suspicious, jealous farm operators, are likely to lack the efficiency as buying and selling agencies that large-scale units with efficient managers would quite naturally possess.

2. The large-scale farms profit economically from the superior managerial ability which they can employ. There is the opportunity and the necessity on the large farm for the separation of the functions of management and of labor. The small farm cannot make provision for such a separation of functions. On the family-farm, the manager is also usually the only adult male laborer employed full time. Putting it the other way about, on the family-farm the laborer is also the manager. In the great majority of cases, this combination of functions is undoubtedly most wasteful. If the farm operator is gifted with good managerial ability, the day-by-day grind of manual labor which he must perform keeps him from making an efficient use of his powers of management. If, upon the other hand, the farm operator is lacking in executive or managerial ability, the full benefit of his hard manual labor is lost because of a lack of wise direction.

E. G. Nourse, of the Institute of Economics, says of this:

> At the present time almost two-thirds of the workers engaged in farming are in direct control of the business units in which they are employed. It would seem a self-evident proposition that in no field of human endeavor could it be expected that leaving managerial decisions to two-thirds of all the workers could result in anything but inefficiency almost medieval in character. Here, I think, is the real economic demand for large-scale organization in agriculture. We must have the function of management differentiated from that of the actual operative

processes of the farm if we are to take advantage of the technological possibilities which lie in the path of modern scientific and commercial agriculture.[1]

3. The large-scale farm is able to effect economies through more efficient use of labor and equipment. While agriculture does not permit the high degree of division of labor characterizing most urban industries, it does permit a much greater application of the principle of specialization than can be effected on the family-farm. The large-scale farm may employ different types of men to perform the different tasks which are to be performed. There is the opportunity afforded on the most efficiently managed of the large farms for the development of specialized skills of various sorts. The large-scale farms may also make use of the largest types of agricultural machinery, taking full advantage of the economies to be derived in this way.

4. Certain types of overhead expenses may be reduced. Others, while high, as in the case of the salaries of capable managers, may readily be defended as profitable investments.

Economic Disadvantage of Large-scale Farming

By far the most important economic disadvantage of the large unit as compared with the family-farm lies in the fact that on the former, in general, all labor performed must be paid for, at rates that are fairly comparable to those paid elsewhere in the economic world. If one is not interested in the human factors involved, this economic difference in favor of the small farm becomes very significant. The manager of a family-farm who is usually also his own chief laborer may drive himself through a fourteen-hour day, and through a seven-day week, for a pitifully low wage. His wife and young children who are not even listed among the "gainfully employed" may together be accomplishing as much in the way of an economic contribution as is he. Interest in their work and the traditions of the family-farm institution keep them at their task. Upon the other hand, hired laborers on the large farms are no more interested in their work than are laborers in general, and they have the same reasons as other laborers to expect time and a half for overtime.

The fact that laborers must be paid for what they do on the large farms, while this is not the case on the family unit, is apparently the decisive economic disadvantage of large-scale operation. It is surely the only factor that makes it possible for the average small farm to remain in competition with the large. Large-scale operation, however, has other difficulties to face as compared with the large-scale operation of most other industries.

[1] U. S. Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Service Department, *Large-scale Farming*, p. 16, Washington, D. C., 1929.

Certain Difficulties Encountered in Large-scale Farming

One of the difficulties of large-scale farming consists in the fact that operations cannot be so completely standardized as are the processes of production in a factory. This is especially the case if the land area under cultivation is extremely large or if it is made up of widely scattered plots. The more nearly uniform the conditions of topography and soil, the simpler are the problems of management. Large farms are likely to present a variety of natural conditions and thus to make management correspondingly complicated. This, however, is a difficulty to be faced rather than a significant deterrent to large-scale agricultural administration.

Another present difficulty is the lack of well-qualified men to serve as managers of large-scale farms. There is nothing at all permanent, however, in this situation. Should the trend toward corporation farming become somewhat more marked, state colleges of agriculture would undoubtedly set themselves to work to meet the demand for such types of training as are needed.

The third difficulty lies in the fact that widely scattered laborers are more difficult to supervise than are those who work in compact groups. On some of the seventy-four farms, laborers are worked to some extent in gangs. Not all farm work, however, can be done by men working in gangs. Much of it must be done by relatively isolated individuals and, when these isolated men are interested almost entirely in the pay envelope rather than in accomplishment for its own sake, there is danger that work may be slighted in various ways. There is every reason to suppose, however, that this difficulty will be reduced if large-scale farming becomes more general. Better types of men are likely to be attracted to the occupation than are to be found generally at the present time in the ranks of farm laborers. The work will quite naturally become more completely mechanized than it is at present, demanding more highly skilled and better-paid laborers. Methods of supervision also will undoubtedly be improved.

Obstacles Tending to Prevent Rapid Expansion of Large-scale Farming

Whether or not one favors a thoroughgoing transformation of American agriculture from a system prevailingly of family units to a corporation system of large units, all would seemingly be forced to agree that the probability of such a change taking place in the visible future is extremely slight. The change will come if such a change becomes profitable. Those having funds to invest are in general searching for possibilities of greatest gain. Corporation farming must offer financial possibilities as good as, or better than, those afforded elsewhere, in order to attract

capital or else it will not develop to any large extent. The possibility of its becoming generally attractive financially is seriously lessened by the fact of the existence of family-farm traditions that keep men, women, and children at work in family-unit agriculture without profits.

It is easy to imagine such an elevation of standards of living among present-day farmers that they would be forced almost *en masse* to leave their farms, offering them for sale at prices low enough to attract profit-seeking capital which would be used to finance large-scale operation. If farm young people in general should start their thinking in terms of a high standard of living made up of desirable things to be purchased, and of a reasonable amount of leisure, rather than beginning their thinking with the land, the family-farm system might pass out of existence as the dominant form of farm organization. Because of the fact that so many children of farmers ask themselves what they can get out of life as farmers, instead of what they can get as men and women with the whole world of occupations to choose from, the present system continues. Individual inertia and family caste pressure, aided by isolating forces both natural and man-made, hold the children of farmers on the farms and maintain the prices of farm land higher than can be justified from the point of view of earning power.

The corporation large-scale farming system is sometimes referred to as the city man's or the business man's ideal solution of agricultural problems in America. The urban business man's world is one of individuals instead of families, and one of individuals who are seeking to advance themselves economically rather than primarily to follow a beaten path with relatively slight regard for the size of the economic return. Urban business men who consider the matter at all expect to see their world extended to include the farming occupation. This would surely come about if people upon the farms should come to accept the ideals that characterize urban industry, namely, those making for individual economic advancement. As the urban portion of the population increases in relative size and the agencies of communication extend their influence more and more completely to embrace all people wherever they may live, there will probably be developed a common world of values. People of the farms will come to think and feel as do the people of the cities, whether or not one concludes that this is to be desired, and this will express itself in similar forms of industrial organization. The transforming process is bound to proceed much more slowly than the urban business man is likely to imagine, for, in general, he has little conception of the significance and power of family-farm traditions.

Robert S. Brookings, founder of Brookings Institute, a prominent urban business man and educator, has recently expressed his view, which is that of many others, in regard to the desirability of developing corporation farming generally in the United States. His statement is as follows:

My own opinion is that the best means of hastening the present slow and harrowing process of agricultural regeneration is by the formation of agricultural corporations which will accomplish in organization and management what big business has accomplished for industry. Following the method pursued in the organization of the United States Steel Corporation, the most inefficient farms, which as now operating are worth less than nothing, would be paid for in safe bonds of the "Agricultural Corporation" with some regard for their potential value; and the most efficient farms would receive their full present value in the same bonds, and their efficient managers would become the department managers of the corporation. As these corporations would combine all advantages claimed by Campbell and Ford for large-scale farming, with the additional advantage in methods of efficient management shown by Professor Mead, I believe they would greatly reduce even the present low cost of production of the most efficient farmers; and that their securities would eventually become one of the most extensive and safest forms of investment for our people, converting the present immense and unprofitable values tied up in farm lands and equipment into an additional means of distributing the national wealth among all the people. While I am personally opposed to any and all income-tax exemptions on bonds, if the government wishes to facilitate such a reorganization of agriculture, it could exempt agricultural corporation bonds, as it does land bank bonds, from income tax, under similar restrictions for insuring security.[1]

If farmers, in general, would be willing to sell their farms at prices which correctly represented their actual earning power, the transformation which Mr. Brookings considers would be more readily possible. Those who were responsible for organizing the United States Steel Corporation had business men to deal with, men who could talk the same language as the promoters of the giant merger. Business men attempting to form great farm corporations would find that they were dealing with people who are primarily not at all men of business. Most farmers do not know what their land is worth as a source of economic income, and many who *do* know are not in the occupation primarily for economic reasons. It is the present failure of farmers and business men to talk the same language which is the real obstacle to the rapid extension of large-scale agricultural organization.

Social Changes That Might Be Expected to Accompany a Transition to Large-scale Farming

In view of the possibility of the supplanting of the family-farm system by the corporation-farm system at some more or less distant time, it may be none too early to attempt to forecast in part the social changes that may be expected to accompany the economic transition.

Obviously, in a thoroughgoing system of corporate ownership and operation, the farmer, as he now exists, would have no part. There

[1] Black, John D., *Agricultural Reform in the United States*, p. 369, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1929.

would be stockholders, large and small, as there are elsewhere in our industrial world, and there would be boards of directors. On the land, there would be managers, skilled experts, and laborers, but no farmers any more than there are cobblers in the modern shoe factory. The change, for better or worse, would bring those engaged in agricultural production into more perfect social alignment with those engaged elsewhere in our industrial world.

At the present time, most of those engaged in urban industry, whether pleasantly situated or not, have a fairly definite knowledge of their position in the general scheme of things. They can see the next rung of the ladder upon which they are standing and they know something of how good the possibilities are that they may occupy that next rung. As revealed in the Middletown study, the present-day possibilities of the common laborer's being promoted to a foremanship are extremely slight. At any rate, the position of a common laborer in urban industry, as well as that of nearly everyone else in the urban scheme of life, is a fairly definite one. The member of the family-farm economic and social order stands outside this dominant American system of classification. According to one way of looking at it, he is a member of a distinctly rural (agricultural) system as distinguished from the urban (non-agricultural) scheme of life. Many writers feel that rural people should and may develop their own separate world of values and institutions different from those of the city but not inferior to the latter. Such a division into two distinct groups, however, of a people who do not because of innate characteristics so group themselves, who live in a world in which ease of communication and transportation is very great, and in which the democratic ideal of equality of opportunity is held, at least as a theory, is impossible to carry out in any thoroughgoing way.

The farmer is not a member of a complete world of his own; neither does he belong to the world of the city. Even if all sons and daughters of farmers should desire to become farmers and the wives of farmers, which they do not, they would be unable to do so. A continued migration of farm-born to the cities is inevitable. The family-farm experience and traditions of these migrants do not fit them at all well to do themselves justice either economically or socially in the very different life of the cities to which they go. Those who remain on the farm are more and more conscious of the life off the farms, owing to improving means of communication. They are thus rendered less and less able to live a separate life of their own, without being aided to any comparable extent to share in an efficient and satisfying way the life of the dominant urban section of America's population. In other words, the farmer's position in American society is becoming more and more anomalous.

Should the corporation or large-scale method of farming prevail, the confusion incident to the present situation would cease. The lines of

economic and social stratification of the cities would extend themselves through the agricultural districts. Those engaged in any phase of agricultural production would be as definitely situated in the general scheme as those engaged in any other activity of the common life. Most of those at work on the land would presumably be common laborers of the same general class as those engaged elsewhere in the business of production. Skilled laborers and experts would also have their part to play and they would be of the same general class as those of comparable skill and training elsewhere.

To most writers, the thought of such a transition is apparently very distasteful. They seem to see the so-called "independent American farmer," a respectable middle-class citizen, seized upon by a system and forced to relinquish his independence and his middle-class status and to begin to take orders from a boss. A more accurate, and at the same time a more pleasant, view of the process would see, in the first place, the present farming population's gradual absorption into the dominant population group of the nation, with individuals locating themselves wherever they could best fit in on the basis of individual choice and fitness. The second part of the picture would depict the coming of specialized experts to direct the processes of American agriculture and of laborers to do the manual work required. Some of these experts and laborers would come from the vanishing farmer group, others would come from the cities. Some of the city laborers and their families who under present conditions have limited opportunity for contact with nature would be afforded the chance to work in the fields and to live close to the soil. Henry Ford and others have suggested plans according to which laborers would spend a portion of their time in urban industry, and the remainder in agriculture. The picture from the standpoint of the poorer city classes is by no means an unpleasant one.

In any case, the American farmer is suffering a transformation. The old independence is vanishing. The set of circumstances that made him in the middle of the last century a somewhat romantic figure in his rugged individualism has quite largely disappeared. Such contact as he has with the city is tending more and more to be with the lower hand-laboring class. The probability is that the men who do most of the manual labor in agriculture in the future will in any case be generally regarded as of our lower classes, whether they are engaged under the family-farm system or under the corporation system. There is something to be said for the belief that the latter system would give both greater efficiency in production and a more satisfactory social life.

The freeing of wives and children from the traditional solidarity of family-farm life should be considered an important social gain. Under the corporation system both women and children would count more

completely as individuals than they are able to do under the family-farm system. The families of managers and salaried experts would be afforded the same sort of chance at life as is afforded to those of similar station elsewhere in the social order, whether their homes chance to be in the country or in the town. The families of common laborers would suffer much the same deprivations that are in general suffered by lower-class families elsewhere, although many of them would consider it an advantage to be able to live in the country.

Under the corporation system, women who worked in the industry would do so through choice or because of the forces of economic necessity, as is the case with women elsewhere, rather than because of the nature of their husbands' occupation, as is the case with wives in the family-farm system. The contrast between the lives of family-farm women and of others who live on farms, as noted in one Michigan community by a teacher in the village school is discussed as follows in a class paper:

In the past few years, more young people, both boys and girls, have gone to high school from the farms than ever have before. Some go to college. I have talked with many farm mothers about this and they are the ones who favor their children's going to school, not the farm men. The women work to the utmost of their strength to afford the children the chance to get to school. Many men do not favor this at all. They usually think the boys will make better farmers by staying at home working than by attending school and they do want their help on the farm. They feel badly as a rule if son or daughter wishes to go away. The young people whom I know that have gone out to school have never returned to farms. The mother is the one who sends the child out. She wants him, or her, to know something different than she has known and will do anything to keep them from becoming farmers. This is the attitude of all farm women that I know who live on family-sized farms.

I do know besides these farm women another kind of farm woman. There are six families on one farm, each man having his particular work to do and receiving a salary. The men who live on the farm are the overseers of particular lines of work. The laborers come from the town and are brought out by the company's autos in the morning, and taken home at night. The women on these farms are just like the town women of the middle class. They have no outdoor work to do, only home duties, and leisure time to study and learn to make the best of their homes and enjoy life more fully by having time to do the things they care most about doing. They live about three and a half miles from town and they attend just as many social functions and lectures as does the town woman. They are just as able to talk on any current topic. They seem to live a broad life and enjoy the farm. They even say they don't care to live in town again as now they have advantages of both town and country.

I have had a great many children in town school who came from the country. I have talked with the mothers of these children and have visited in some of their homes long enough to begin wondering about their lives. I always felt as if I wanted to get away so that I couldn't see the women working, working, first at one task, then another. It seems as if the tasks must surely be finished before

long, but there continue to be always one thing more to be done until an unreasonable hour, and then I always knew there was something else that ought to have been done. Then to visit in the six homes on this large farm! The women were dressed in modish house dresses, showing that they had time to observe the fashions and follow them. After dinner, everybody had time to sit and talk or there was playing and singing. They are real homes where the day's work is not always talked about and worried over. I had never thought much of why there was this great difference in these homes or if I did I just thought the difference was in the people themselves. Now, I know it was not a difference in people but a difference in conditions that existed and guided these people's lives.

The children of farm laborers under the corporation system should be expected to have certain advantages that are not at all general in the case of those on family-farms. Most farm families are lacking either in the financial ability or in the educated ideals, or in both of these essentials, to such an extent that their children are severely handicapped. The children of farm laborers may be made free of the sort of caste pressure that is a characteristic of the family-farm institution. Tendencies to force children into labor on corporation farms would be considered in the same light as the tendency toward child labor in other industries.

The attitude toward education on the part of laborers on the corporation farm would without doubt be more generally favorable than is the case at present with the farm population. It is to be supposed that intelligent farm laborers will share the attitude held by laborers elsewhere of desiring to see their children prepare themselves to occupy higher places on the occupational ladder than they themselves have been prepared to occupy. While many present-day farmers take this same attitude and are willing to sacrifice themselves in very real ways to give their children the best of educational advantages, the very nature of the family-farm organization, with its traditions and its standards evolved under conditions of a relative isolation and somewhat extreme family solidarity, tends to make for a certain smugness and self-sufficiency in outlook which is deadening to educational aspirations.

There would seem to be no reason to suppose that the children of farm laborers in the corporation system would have pressure exerted upon them, at least by the parents, to train themselves for service in the field of agriculture. Seemingly, vocational guidance would be afforded a freer opportunity for functioning than it is likely to have in a school whose patrons are very largely family-farm people.

The following case history is presented to illustrate some of the theory which has just been advanced. It has to do with the family of a farm laborer in central Michigan.

A certain young man found himself beginning his married life with very little education or capital and with occupational experience only of manual labor which had been carried on almost entirely in agriculture.

In determining his life occupation, three possibilities presented themselves. He could become a common laborer in town. He could rent a farm and plan on purchasing one by the mortgage route. He could become a farm laborer. Of these three possibilities, he chose the last.

This man bought a house and lot in the open country, the plot of ground being no larger than a fairly large city lot. He established himself and his wife in this home and began work for a neighboring farmer. Since this community is a prosperous farming district and contains several farmers who are able to hire help the year around, the man has found no difficulty in keeping employed. As he is very capable and dependable, he has had good wages for labor of that class.

His wife, being the wife of a laborer instead of a farmer, is tied down to the home less than is usually the case with farm women. She does some work in the garden, and she works occasionally for wages, helping with fruit picking and sorting.

These people have one child, a son. The boy has had some work to do about the house and lawn and garden, but he has done no regular farm work. Work has never been allowed to interfere with his education. He made a good record in the village school and has gone on to college. He is developing under good training what appears to be a somewhat exceptional musical ability. His parents have been unable to give him much financial aid. But at any rate, they have not stood in his way and they have given him a truly understanding sympathy with his aspirations, which cannot be measured in dollars and cents. The financial part of his support while a student is being met by a combination of self-help, scholarships earned by achievements in music, and loans from interested relatives. The young man, the son of a farm laborer, is apparently on his way toward distinction.

The program of this farm laborer has been all out of harmony with the small-farm-ownership, distinctive-rural-civilization ideals generally stressed in rural sociology. According to these ideals, the man should have climbed the agricultural ladder up to ownership, making full use of the labor resources of his wife and son to aid him in that climb. His reward would have consisted largely of the self-respect which goes with farm ownership in a community of farm owners, including the expectation that his son would carry on in that community and on that farm after his, the father's, days of labor were over.

If the laborer had chosen the farm-owning path, the son would very likely have followed in his occupational footsteps. The mother would have had less time to devote to the boy's early care and training. The boy would have had less time for school and little time for music. The parents would have been less free to think of their son as an individual because of the urgent need to consider him as part of the economic unit. Together the three, through strenuous labor and careful saving, very

possibly would have gotten together more wealth for the son to inherit than the parents are likely under existing conditions to pass on to him. His wealth of talent for music almost surely would never have been discovered.

The speculations of the preceding paragraph are based on a casual survey of the general situation as regards farm-owning parents and their children in the community in which this laborer lived. They are as sound as anything can be, short of absolute certainty. Whether one is to consider the laborer's choice of twenty-five or thirty years ago to have been a fortunate one is entirely dependent upon his scale of values. A consideration of the social factors at work in the home of this laborer, as contrasted with those that tend to prevail in the homes of family-farm people, may lead us very safely to conclude that the children of owners do not necessarily get a better start in life than do those of laborers of equally good stock and of equally high general ideals. One may conclude, further, that the families of laborers, in general, rate lower in things cultural than do those of renters and owners, not because they are in the labor class but rather because of deficiency in inherited capacity or in ideals. Inferior types of humanity undoubtedly tend to gravitate to the common labor class, thus pulling down its average in matters cultural. The lower economic class, however, is by no means entirely made up of people of inferior quality. It is not at all inevitable that the families of those who would do the common labor in a *régime* of corporation farming, provided such a system came to prevail, would be inferior in quality to those of the family-farm units of the present time. Different values would be bound to be stressed in such a *régime* from those which are traditional with farming people now. The new values would not necessarily be inferior ones.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STANDARD OF LIVING

Every individual considering his relation to the rest of the world thinks of certain elements of satisfaction which he wishes to make his own. Each unique individual gives expression to himself. These wants embrace in part a variety of things that may be purchased in a store, such as food and clothing and household furnishings and books and musical instruments and automobiles. They include, also, the services of other people—carpenters, painters, mechanics, barbers, beauty experts, teachers, doctors, nurses, ministers, professional entertainers. They include, too, leisure time that may be used for travel and recreation or for social intercourse with congenial friends, or for sitting quietly at home with books and radio. They may include types of work that are pleasurable in themselves instead of being merely means to an end. Each individual has his own unique organization of wants. To say that no two of us are alike is equivalent to the statement that no two of us have precisely the same wants.

Distinction should be made between the desired, or possibly an imagined, standard of living and the actual standard achieved by the individual. Some people of moderate circumstances derive a sort of real enjoyment in imagining how they would live should they fall heir to a million dollars. Many construct for themselves imagined standards of living which they more or less vaguely hope to make effective at some later period of their lives if and when they have achieved a certain measure of material prosperity. All are living day by day according to certain habitual standards which are a very real part of their lives and which they would not surrender except under the pressure of necessity, and then only with attitudes of extreme regret. These habitual standards are subject to change, along with the changing nature of the individual and the altering conditions of his life. For the most part, the changes are gradual, corresponding with the slowly rising or falling financial status of the person and the slow development of new ideas as to what one in his circumstances should be able to provide for himself from the world's vast store of desirable values.

While each individual has his own standard of living, he never arrives at it alone. He is always a member of a group, and the group of which he is a member has its standards to which he is impelled to conform to a greater or lesser extent. Each social set is distinguished from others

by the way its members spend their money and their leisure time, which is in part determined by the amount of money and leisure time that the members have at their disposal. Families have their own standards which conform more or less closely to those of the community or occupational group to which the family belongs, and individuals born into these families take over the standards of living of the parents more or less completely as their starting point in life, gradually developing new standards of their own to the extent that the conditions under which they live differ from those of the parents.

If the individual or family income is too low to make possible the desired standard of living, there are certain possibilities open to those who are dissatisfied: (1) In certain cases it is possible for one to increase his income through greater exertion at his job or through some means to secure promotion in the field of his occupation. (2) Sometimes it is feasible for one to change his occupation to another that is more lucrative. (3) One may live out his days in a chronic state of dissatisfaction because of the perpetual gap separating his actual standard of living from the one which he desires. (4) One may renounce his desires and come to take pleasure in the actual standard that is achieved, however low that may chance to be. The nature of the individual goes far to determine which of these paths he follows. With some individuals, a desired standard of living stimulates to greater productive efficiency, thus increasing the income and making possible an advance to the higher level. With others, low productive efficiency and low income drag the ideal down to fit the actual situation. With still others, a condition of harmony between the actual and the desired state never develops. However much these people may provide for themselves, they are constantly unhappy because of what they cannot afford.

Income and the standard of living are mutually dependent factors. The more money one has to spend, speaking generally, the more money one is likely to spend for values which he feels mean an enhanced standard of living. It is just as true, as a general statement, that the higher one's desired standard of living may be, the more strenuously he will apply himself to provide the purchasing power to put the desired standard into effect. A starvation wage leads to the very lowest standard of living. Upon the other hand, a total lack of ambition to possess the good things of life leads to low efficiency and a correspondingly low income. Neither factor is more fundamental than the other.

The Farmer's Standard of Living

In a general sort of way, farmers as a class have a different standard of living from that of any urban group. It is so different in fact that certain writers tend to the opinion that attempts to draw statistical comparisons between farmers and other groups are profitless. They

say, in effect, that the farming population actually composes a distinctive culture with values of its own and that instead of drawing comparisons between farmer and urbanites, in which the farmer is quite likely to make an inferior showing, the desirable course is to stress the satisfactions which the farmer may readily achieve in his own world, and let it go at that.

Much may be said for this way of looking at the matter. While the average farm family, when compared with the average middle-class family of the city, fares rather badly in regard to many things that may be had only by the expenditure of money, the farm family has certain things that come to them right out of the day's work and the life in the country that may be exalted into counterbalancing values. The farmer and his wife and children are not as well supplied as are comparable people of the city with a variety of foods, or with expensively stylish clothes, or with modern household conveniences and furnishings, or with health facilities, or with formal education, or with ready access to modern churches and libraries and theaters, or with time and equipment for recreation, or with the opportunity for a variety of stimulating social contacts, but they do have a wealth of space and quiet and fresh air and sunshine which some fairly well-to-do city people lack. It is perfectly possible to place such a high value upon such things as the farmer *does* possess that one may convincingly argue that his standard of living is fully as high as is that of the urban family whose cash expenditure for life's satisfactions is much greater.

It is an interesting mental possibility for one who is denied certain desirable things to arrive at the conclusion that he is much better off without them. Illustrations of this way of thinking may be found in great numbers among the published statements of farm women. One such is the following:

> It seems to me we need pictures of the type of some of the old Dutch painters to show the woman that although she may not have all the conveniences she may still be happy and that *she may be leading a more beautiful and worthwhile life than if she had them.* (Italics mine.) . . . I was born in a house where there was a bathroom. When we went to our little farm in Vermont, it took some time before we could have one. We have been putting the money into things which will make for greater production. So we do not have electricity . . . It is a source of satisfaction to me to think of these old paintings.[1]

Another farm woman reports as follows:

> In our community there were both the city and the country factors and we farm women did feel a little bit ashamed because we were not dressed as well as city women. There was a homemade look about our clothes. During the war we came in contact with each other and started a parent-teacher association.

[1] *Farm Woman Answers the Question*, p. 10, The Farmer's Wife, St. Paul, Minn., undated publication, report of a conference held in March, 1926.

The contact tended to broaden us. The home demonstration agents have helped us with our clothing work so we don't feel when we go to town that we look so much like "country." That has given us confidence. *We have become so much interested in improving our community that we have forgotten all about "inferiority complex."*

Another thing I think we should do is to teach our children from babyhood that there is no place on earth better than the country. I try to bring that fact out with the boys and girls I meet in school work, in the Red Cross drives, and in all organizations. Let them know that we can do things in the country; that we have advantages out there. We don't need pictures on our walls to do it. Who can paint a better picture than the clouds, than the sunset, than the trees? After all, what do the pictures consist of other than these clouds, sunsets and trees—the very things we have?

I have a game with the youngsters—the school children and my own children —to see who can find the first flowers in the woods. This year we had a flower show. The children in school didn't know they had any flowers and you would be surprised to know that there were over one hundred different varieties of wild flowers in bloom at one time in the mountains. Get the children's eyes on the beauty of the country and they will see infinite pictures.

This year we are to exhibit foliage and ferns and then we will take up the study of food in the country in comparison with food in the city. We will have the children name over the things they eat. We will ask them what city people have to pay for chicken and milk and those things that are so much better and more abundant in the country.

In all these ways we shall try to prove to them that we are really better off than people in the city. *When we are doing these worth-while things we have no time to think about personal humiliation.*[1]

The impartial observer as he reads statements such as the two just quoted, and of which there are many to be found in similar publications, will very likely conclude not that country living is superior to life in the towns, but rather that there are many women, and without doubt men as well, whose type of mind is such that, whatever their lot in life chanced to be, they would call it good. Wherever such people are, they are "living on top of the world." The quoted statements of the two farm women are not testimonials to the advantages of country living. They testify rather to the dauntless spirit of individual women who, whether living in country or city and under whatever circumstances of material deprivation, see their tangible surroundings in terms of beauty.

The difficulty with the separate rural-culture method of convincing farm people that, while their standards of living are different from those of the city, they are fully equal to the latter is that it does not work in the cases of great numbers of people on farms. Many who are in the farming occupation through no real choice of their own but simply through the natural working of the family-farm system really desire just about the same sort of good things in life that the same kind of people in town

[1] *Ibid.*

are getting. Merely through the circumstance of being farmers, they are denied these good things. It is not because of inherent inability either to achieve or to appreciate that they are denied them. It is merely because they are farmers with the traditional farm way of living, and the present low level of farm income prevents them from gaining certain experiences in life that others who are inherently no more worthy than themselves are enjoying.

There is little need for a study of tables of statistics by the farmer and his wife who may easily compare their scale of living with that of relatives and school-day associates who are living in the city. If their particular urban friends and acquaintances seem to them to be getting less out of life than are they, they are likely to consider themselves to be fortunately situated on the farm. If, upon the other hand, the opposite seems to be the case, they are pretty sure to draw the opposite conclusion.

Makers of statistical comparisons, of whom there have been many, come to varying conclusions. Professor Zimmerman, basing his conclusions upon a study of 226 farm families and 252 city families whose homes are in Minnesota, decides that ". . . in spite of the apparent high average incomes of the city population, farmers are really better off as to both incomes and standards of living than the lower two-thirds of the urban population."[1] Studies such as this are always interesting but, after all, the significantly human question concerns the contrast between the present situation of each specific farmer with what it probably would be had he been born and reared in the city. There is possible no statistical precision in imagined contrasts of the sort suggested. It is just as true, however, that the statistical precision of a table of averages tells us nothing about the individual case—and the world is a world of individual cases.

It would seem that every farmer and every farmer's wife who are at all given to reflection would at some time ask this question, "If, instead of having been born on a farm, I had been born in the city with the same inherent ability that I actually possess, and with parents of the same economic status as were mine at the time of my birth, how would I probably be situated now? If, instead of being submerged as a child in the close solidarity of the family-farm group, I had been afforded opportunity for as complete an individual development as children of my sort usually get in town, what difference would that have made with my adult life? If I could have had the advantage of the superior schools of the city, and the training classes of various sorts, and the clubs, and association with other young people of my age of varied tastes and inclinations—if, on

[1] ZIMMERMAN, CARLE G., "Incomes and Expenditures of Minnesota Farm and City Families," *Bulletin* 255, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Minnesota, June, 1929.

the basis of all of these, I could have had the opportunity to find my life work through choice and competition—what would I probably be doing now?"

Correct answers to the above question, could they be secured for each of the farm-born adult members of America's farming population, would determine just how much has been their gain or their loss through having been born into the farming occupation. Statistics show that most farmers who enter the occupational life of the city become laborers. One cannot conclude from that fact, however, that farmers should in general be thought of as being naturally of an inferior or labor-class mentality. For the most part farm migrants to the city have not secured in their early farm home and community environment the proper sort of preparation to enable them to do themselves justice in the very different life in the city. They must pick what they can get in the way of an urban occupation, which means that they are very likely to start near the bottom of the occupational ladder—in the unskilled manual-labor group.

The average farmer's income is more nearly comparable to that of the manual-labor group of the city than to that of any other occupational group. To classify the farmer with the urban unskilled laborer, however, on account of his low income is to beg the whole question. The question is what should each specific American farmer, and each farmer's wife, on the basis of such inherent ability as they may possess, and on the basis of whatever prestige should be theirs through being native-born, as most of them are, and through being the children of independent, home-owning citizens, as is usually the case—what should such people be getting in the way of financial and other satisfactions in this highly prosperous American life? And the answer to the question must be that, according to the above criteria, these people in general should be getting cash income and other rewards for the intelligent effort they are able and willing to put into the business of living, fully equal to those received by urban middle-class business and professional people and highly skilled craftsmen. Many of them, had their training been such as their capacities justified, would be among the leaders in every field of achievement in the national life.

Some farmers are able on their earnings to maintain a standard of living of the urban middle-class sort. Most of them are unable to do so, in certain cases undoubtedly very largely because they are poor farmers, however efficient they might have been in some other calling. The relative economic position of agriculture, however, is sufficient to account for the low incomes and standards of living of the farming population in general. Having been given the family-farm start in life, these people are prepared for an occupation in which rewards are relatively low; conversely they are unprepared for anything else. Whether they remain on the farm or go as unskilled laborers to the city, they are not likely to

receive an income or to be able to achieve a standard of living such as their inherent natures would justify when comparisons are made with those who are differently situated in the national scheme of life. It should be a matter of gravest public concern that conditions are such as to set an apparently perpetual handicap against those of our people who chance to be born on farms.

The Objective Measurement of Standard of Living

It is obviously impossible to determine how well an individual or a family may be living by learning how much money is being expended for items in the budget. Yet there is no apparent way of objectifying the scale of living other than through determining the financial outlay involved. In a rough sort of way it must be concluded that families spending $3,000 a year to pay for life's necessities and satisfactions have a higher standard of living than those who spend only $1,500. Many of those who have the higher amounts to spend are undoubtedly wasteful and injudicious in their buying choices. There is no reason to suppose, however, that those who expend the smaller amounts are getting more for their money. People everywhere get certain satisfactions which have no money value connected with them, or at least for which they do not pay. There is no reason to assume, as is so frequently done, that farmers as a class get more of these intangible or unpaid for satisfactions than do others. Such an assumption may be useful to the person on the farm who is comparing his income with that of some more highly paid middle-class acquaintance in the city. It has undoubtedly made life more livable for many farming men and women. There is no scientific basis, however, for such an assumption. There is no reason to assume, for example, that the joys of middle-class family life in the city are any less than those on the farm, merely because city families are smaller and do not spend so much of their time together. The farmer has a readier contact with the things of nature than do many urbanites. The city person, upon the other hand, has the satisfaction of knowing that a doctor is readily available in case of emergency, even though one may never be needed and thus never need to be paid for. The intangible satisfactions of urban life are fully as numerous as those of the farm. Such comparing as is to be done must be worked out in terms of the common medium of exchange.

E. L. Kirkpatrick concludes, upon the basis of extended research carried out under the auspices of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, that a "$1,598 standard of living is somewhere near typical of the prevailing standard of living among white families of moderately prosperous farming sections."[1] This figure was

[1] Kirkpatrick, E. L., *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1926.

arrived at by the survey method made use of in the cases of 2,886 families located in eleven states of the Union. Every precaution was taken to make sure that the family selected would be a fair sample. Other studies carried out during the same period (1922–1924), in which the major study was being made, support the conclusions drawn on the basis of the latter.

As the $1,598 is an average, very likely all of the families represented spent more or less than this amount. Two per cent of the number investigated spent less than $600 a year. More than 10 per cent spent $2,400 or over. The remaining nearly 90 per cent were well distributed as to cost of standard of living between the $600 and $2,400 points.

Of the $1,598 worth of goods used on the average only $914 were actually paid for in cash, the remaining $684 worth being furnished by the farm in the form of house rent, family fuel, and food, which were in general priced at the amounts they would have sold for had they been disposed of. Retail prices rather than wholesale would necessarily have been taken to place the farm family on the same basis as families in towns as far as the fuel and food items are concerned. Wholesale prices having been used, the $1,598 should be thought of as being the equivalent of a somewhat higher town cost of living.

Professor Carl C. Taylor estimated in 1926 that $1,940 a year was the lowest amount on the average that city families would need to spend to maintain themselves at all properly. He arrived at this estimate by averaging the corrected findings of Prof. W. F. Ogborn, the New York Factory Commission, and U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics based upon three separate studies. It would seem that there could be no fairer method of deciding upon some definite amount to represent a minimum urban cost of living. If it be accepted as a satisfactory figure to set over against Dr. Kirkpatrick's $1,598, representing the average cost of living for farm families, the conclusion inevitably follows that, even were the latter amount raised somewhat, as would be necessary if the farm-produced fuel and food were thought of in terms of retail prices, the *average* cost of living for "moderately prosperous" farm families is lower than a *minimum* cost of proper living for urban families. It may be argued pro and con whether a proper sort of farm life is less expensive than a proper sort of city life. The conclusion earlier in this chapter is that it is not. In this paragraph farmers have been compared with urban *laborers*, for it is only the latter class that one has in mind when considering minimum family budgets. Middle-class city families live on a considerably higher plane than do the families of the labor class and, if the reasoning earlier in the chapter is valid, it is with the urban middle-class families rather than with those of the labor class that typical farm-owning families should be compared.

As would be expected, all studies of the standards of living among farm families show that owners use more goods than do renters and that

the latter use more than do the families of hired men. In the study of 2,886 families, the owners used goods on the average valued at $1,717, while the average used by tenants is valued at $1,357, and for hired men, $1,237.[1] Some of these farm families of lower status are on their way toward the status of ownership with its higher standard of living. They are denying themselves and saving to the limit in order that they may climb the agricultural ladder. Others of them, upon the other hand, will never be able to elevate their economic status or their standard of living. From any point of view, the latter are members of America's poverty class.

Detailed Consideration of Certain Items in the Farm-family Budget

This consideration of the farmer's standard of living will be continued through a somewhat detailed discussion of certain of the more important items in the family budget. Those items selected for such discussion are food, clothing, housing, health, education, religion, recreation, and general social contacts and advancement. Added significance will be given to the discussion through constant comparison of farm standards with those attained in the city.

Food.—Food is by far the largest single item in the budget of the farm family as it also is in that of the families of city laborers. It comprises about the same proportion of the total budget in the two cases, not far from 40 per cent of the whole cost of living for both city laborers and farmers being taken for this item. Kirkpatrick found in the case of his 2,886 farm families that 41.2 per cent of the cost of living went for food.[2] Practically two-thirds of all of the food consumed by farm families is produced on the farm. As this farm-produced food is valued in terms of wholesale prices rather than retail, the relative value of food in the farmer's budget should be thought of as somewhat higher than that of the same item in the budget of the city laborer. In other words, if all of the food which the farmer and his family ate had been valued at retail prices, as was necessarily done with the one-third of his food which was purchased, the total food item would have taken up a larger part of the whole budget than the 41.2 per cent which Kirkpatrick finds it to be.

The farm family has enough to eat, which is not always true of the city laborer and his children. The farmer is pretty sure to eat three meals a day every day of the year and never to leave the table while still hungry. If he thinks of himself as belonging to the unskilled labor class, he should derive considerable satisfaction from the fact that he is in no danger of going hungry or of being obliged to stand in a bread line. If, however,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 71.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

he classifies himself with the urban middle classes, the question is not worth much consideration. He should, in the latter case take the matter of sufficient quantity of food for granted and pass on to consideration of its quality.

The quality of the food served on the farmer's table is apt to fall below that which is served to the urban middle class.

1. For one thing, there is likely to be insufficient variety. The farmer's business is the raising of food stuffs. He is quite sure to have at his disposal considerable quantities of a certain few articles of diet. As he may supply himself with what he has at wholesale prices, or lower, provided he selects for the table vegetables or fruits that are not readily marketable, and as he must pay retail prices for what he buys in town, there is naturally a great temptation to limit the variety of food as far as possible at any given time to whatever chances to be available on the farm. If a good garden is kept—very frequently the business of the wife—the variety is greater than it could otherwise be. Even then, however, there is quite sure to be a serious lack of green stuff in the winter. This lack of variety is in part due to farm conditions of independence and in many cases to the lack of ready money with which to buy "extras."

2. It is traditional in many farm families to select for their own eating the "culls" and "seconds" of their harvest. They eat the little potatoes and sell the large and take for themselves the partly rotten apples and other fruit, even though they may have hundreds of bushels of fine fruit in storage waiting for a favorable time to sell. Such practices do not necessarily mean that the food eaten is actually of deficient quality. Instead of eating one perfectly sound apple, a farmer may get as much food value from the sound portions of two partly spoiled ones and have the sound apple left to sell. The farm wife may not enjoy preparing small potatoes for dinner so well as large, and the process is likely to take a little longer, but the quality of food, when once prepared, may not be inferior.

The farmer's "small-potato" attitude toward his food may be given a pretty good defense. It may very well be argued that, if the annual cost of the farmer's living is in the neighborhood of $1,598 and if he constantly chooses for his own use the very finest of his food products, his standard of living is in consequence disproportionately developed in the direction of food. It is one thing to refrain from eating the best that he has produced from the motives of the miser: it is another to refrain in the hope that the resultant saving will make possible the purchase of certain good things that one would otherwise be obliged to do without. The selling of farm-produced butter, and the buying for the farm table of factory-produced margarine may be evidence of the very best of judgment. If the farmer is living generally on a margarine rather than a butter level,

why throw the scheme out of harmony by eating butter merely because it is produced at home? One may possibly have a choice between eating the better-tasting butter and adding a good book to the library.

The chief harm that results from the farmer's choice of culls for his own table is without doubt of much greater significance psychologically than physiologically. In cases where this attitude prevails, it is quite likely to be of a piece with a "this is good enough for me" way of thinking maintained generally. If the farmer in question is naturally a "bottom man" in our society then such an attitude is not out of place. If, upon the other hand, he is endowed with a birthright of middle-class or better quality, he should be thinking and living up to such a standard. If, as a farmer, he is unable to maintain himself at the latter level, it is indeed unfortunate that he is not more appropriately situated.

3. The food at the farmer's table has generally not been well prepared or appetizingly served. The farm wife's knowledge of food is more generally a product of her contact with other farm women of the older generation than of modern instruction in such matters. She is likely to be too busy with a variety of other matters to make the most effective use of such knowledge as she possesses. Should she have the very best of knowledge and sufficient time to put it into practice, the men of her table are likely, for the results obtained, to give her small appreciation if not actual ridicule. Owing to the work atmosphere which persistently envelops the place, the farm dining room is all too often a place for "eating" rather than "dining." In rush periods, at least, the situation is not materially different for the farmer as he sits down to eat than it is for street laborers who open their dinner buckets at noon right under the shadow of the noisy and hurrying traffic.

As compared with urban *laborers*, the farmer apparently derives a larger part of his nutrition from meat, eggs, milk, cream, cheese, fruit, vegetables, and a much smaller proportion from cereals.[1]

Clothing.—The sort of clothing that a person wears, taken together with his manner of wearing it and with a broadened conception of clothing to include other items of personal adornment provided by the barber, the hairdresser, and the beauty expert, goes further in the eyes of the casual observer in giving that person his social rating than any other one thing. The food the farmer eats is largely eaten in private. Its quality and his manner of eating it are not likely to come generally to public notice. Upon the other hand, the clothes that he and his wife and children wear are on display wherever the wearers may go. Thus clothing becomes an extremely important factor in the determination of social attitudes. While clothing does not make the man, it does determine to a great extent the attitude of the observer. The wearer, in turn, is influenced greatly by the real or imagined attitudes of those about him. The

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 95.

more socially sensitive the wearer chances to be, the more his own attitudes toward others are affected by what they seem to think of him. If the sensitive person feels that his personal appearance is at least creditable and possibly actually pleasing to those whom he is with, he derives a sense of ease and confidence from that fact. Upon the other hand, if the opposite is the case, he is likely to develop feelings of inferiority which will prevent him from doing himself justice in the company of others. Such inferiority feelings may express themselves in either one of two general ways. In the first case, the person may develop attitudes of shame and humiliation. He may give the appearance of being repressed and of wishing to avoid the company of those whom he thinks present a better appearance than himself. In the second case, he may take on an attitude of apparent pride in an appearance which he judges does not measure up to the conventional standards of his associates. Instead of being repressed, he may vigorously and with apparent happiness assert himself and his peculiarities of costume and personal appearance in whatever social surroundings he may find himself. Whether a given person reacts in the first or the second way, he is prevented from enjoying the fullest mental cooperation with his associates. His self-consciousness erects a barrier which more or less completely isolates him from the general social life of which he is physically a part. One's personal appearance is perhaps most appropriate when it does not call attention to itself to any marked extent, thus making possible a saving of energy of all concerned for the most effective participation in matters of more fundamental importance.

There is a sound basis for the development in America of the comedy type of farmer on the stage and in the newspaper cartoons. The comic element arises in the incongruity of the farmer's position in the general social scheme. The assumption back of the comedy is that the farmer is actually—as far as American birth, natural intellectual capacity, habits of independence derived from years of managing his own business, and wealth—a member of the more favored classes, but that he does not look or act the part as measured by conventional standards. However the farmer may dress while at work on his farm, if, when he came to the city, he could have passed unnoticed in a group of middle-class business and professional men, there never would have come into being the farmer comic type.

The appearance of the lower-class urban laboring man, whether in his work clothes or in his better suit, strikes no one as funny. He occupies a definite place in the social scheme. There is no incongruity. He lives his own life without feeling badly, in general, because of the social rating he is given. He quite surely at times wishes that he were more fortunately situated in the economic way. But, being of the lower class, he is not ashamed to look the part. The farmer is likely to suffer mentally

because of the confusion in regard to his relative status. With students of the rural situation not at all in agreement as to whether the typical farmer is a middle- or lower-class American, it is not at all surprising if the farmer should be a bit uncertain himself.

Before the days of modern communication, very few farmers attempted to classify themselves according to urban standards. There was little sharing of a common life. The farmer on his infrequent visits to the city was free to observe the appearance of the various types of people there as objectively as he observed the various animals in the menagerie; and he might have been as little interested in what the urbanites thought of him as he was in the appraising scrutiny given him by the monkeys at the zoo. He was as alien to the one society as to the other. It was only the home community and its standards that mattered to him, and the farm community thought of clothes mainly in terms of comfort and utility rather than in those of display values.

The new communication has drawn the farmer into increasing mental contact with other groups, which necessitates an adjustment of standards and values. The thoughtful and sensitive person from the farm is now bound more than ever before to be critical of his own appearance and of that of the other members of his family in their association with people of the city. Farmers in their urban contacts at present may be thought of as being divided into four different groups as regards their attitude towards clothes and other items of personal appearance. (1) There is a group of considerable size, quite likely of decreasing numbers, whose attitudes are those of traditional rural independence. The members of this group do not share the life of the city in any intimate sort of way. They actually do not care what city people think of their appearance. They feel themselves to be "as good as" the middle-class people of towns but simply have no sufficient motive to try to dress as well as do the latter. (2) There are those who very definitely accept for themselves a lower-class social rating. Their feelings are not in the least hurt if they are mistaken for city laborers. Their social relations in the city are confined to labor-class contacts. They attempt to dress as well as do their urban laborer friends and relatives, and they take the same attitude toward the better-dressed people of the city, as do the latter. (3) There is a group of increasing size that dresses as well as the middle-class people of the city. They think of themselves as belonging to that latter class. They have relatives and friends among the city business and professional people. They succeed in dressing well enough to maintain themselves in a position of social equality with their urban friends. No one thinks of them as being from the "country." They select their clothing with care to avoid giving an appearance of difference between themselves and those of other middle-class occupational groups. (4) Finally, there is a fairly large group of social misfits. They feel that

they are entitled to a middle-class rating. When they are in the city, they do not wish their appearance to betray their occupation; neither do they wish to be mistaken for lower-class urban residents. For some reason, however, they do not succeed in dressing well enough to give themselves a feeling of ease when they are with those with whom they wish to associate. It may be an inability to afford good clothes; it may be ignorance of what to buy. It may be that the habitual activities of their occupational life unfit them for wearing good clothes easily and inconspicuously.

Women and children are in general much more likely to be sensitive to discrimination based upon differences in clothing than are the men of the family. One of the most painful aspects of family-farm solidarity consists in the fact that individual members of the family—the wife, possibly, or the son or daughter—having a most normal individual longing to possess nice clothes are so often kept from having them even when there is sufficient money available for their purchase. Individual ideas are frequently at variance with traditional standards; and the family is likely to exist pretty much as a unit under the domination of a traditionally minded head, whatever sacrifice of individual desires may chance to be involved.

High-school students from the farms may be given a most unsatisfactory start in life because of what they feel to be lack of suitable clothing. Whether the lack be due to traditional notions on the part of the parents or to a financial inability to buy clothing of the sort worn by city young people, the result on the child's mental life is likely to be equally unsatisfactory. He may in his school life develop an inferiority feeling, from the disastrous effects of which he never completely escapes. Because of attitudes arising out of feelings of humiliation, he may be rendered powerless to face life in a normally positive fashion. Whether he retreats to the farm as an easy way out of difficulty or drifts into the lower ranks of urban labor or manages to get himself into some other occupation in a spirit of revolt against the farm and all that it stands for, the situation is equally deplorable. The young person should be made as little self-conscious as possible during his most impressionable years, and clothing that will not occasion the ridicule of his associates is one important aid to a wholesome mental outlook.

One of the more important difficulties confronting the farmer and his family in the attempt to keep themselves well dressed is the fact that they wear "dress-up clothes" so seldom. Even if they get clothing of very good quality and of the prevailing style at the time it was purchased, it is likely to look "seedy" long before it has been worn out. To discard garments, perfectly good from the standpoint of their warmth-producing quality, merely because they are out of style would seem to most farmers to be a foolishly wasteful procedure.

The average annual cost of clothing for the 2,886 farm families studied by Kirkpatrick was $234.[1] Of this amount, the husband and wife spend just about half, $118.10, the husband's clothing costing $58.80, and the wife's, $59.30, or only $0.50 more than her husband's. Children under fourteen years of age are clothed at a smaller expense than that incurred for the parents; while the opposite is the case for those over that age. Past the age of five, in every age group, the girl's clothing is more expensive than the boy's, the difference between the two becoming increasingly great as long as the children remain at home. This is interesting in view of the fact that the mother's clothing costs practically the same as the father's.

Back of the statistics, one may picture innumerable farm mothers painfully contriving to provide nice things for their daughters while they themselves are managing to get along at an absolutely minimum expense. Apparently it is no more expensive to clothe a woman than a man, if one is thinking only of physical comfort and decency. People of the cities of status comparable to the typical farmer are not satisfied with such minimum standards of dress, at least as far as the women are concerned. Women of the middle and upper classes of the city take comfort and decency for granted when thinking of their clothing and spend their thought and money mainly for dress considered as ornamentation. The well-dressed urban woman adds to the prestige of her husband. An expensive fur coat for the wife serves much the same family purpose as does an expensive motor car in establishing and maintaining social status. However one may feel about these things as symbols of social status, the fact is that they are very real in the minds of great numbers of people. There is reason to believe that clothing was first worn to serve as adornment. At the present time the prosperous urban classes think of clothing mainly from the adornment standpoint. In fundamental nature farming people, as much as city people, are like those savages who were the first to deck themselves out in the skins of animals and to paint their faces, and possibly to pierce their ears that they might hang rings from them, and to dress their hair in ways to attract favorable attention—all for the purpose of enhancing their social prestige. These same practices among prosperous urban people of the present day are frequently spoken of as artificial, when as a matter of fact there seems to be perfectly good reason for assuming that they spring as naturally out of human nature at the present time as they did thousands of years ago with our savage forebears in the forests of Northern Europe. Many European peasant peoples at the present time bedeck themselves in beautiful costumes for their gala occasions, putting high value upon the decorative aspects of clothing. The farm-born child in America has as natural a craving for beauty in dress as has the European peasant child

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 102.

or the child in the American city. The statistics indicate that the American farm family makes some concession to the children and young people, providing finer clothes for them than are required to serve the purposes of comfort and utility. It is also indicated by the statistics that the average farm wife gets no such concession. Purchasing power on the farm is traditionally expended elsewhere than in providing better clothes for the wife than are absolutely needed. Possibly it is the influence of Puritanism on American life that must be held mainly accountable for the prevailing standards held by farmers in reference to dress.

According to Kirkpatrick's statistics, those young people at home of the age group nineteen to twenty-four are more expensively clothed than any other members of the farm family. The annual cost of the clothing worn by the sons of this age group is 54 per cent higher than that of the heads of families. That of the daughters in this group is 67 per cent higher than that of farm wives. It is the age of courtship and marriage. The family-farm income is drawn upon to aid the young people of marrying age to make themselves attractive to the opposite sex. After marriage has taken place and separate farm homes are set up, the clothing expense drops for members of both sexes, further in the case of the wife than in that of the husband, striking practically the same level. Sons and daughters still living at home who are older than twenty-four, while more expensively dressed than farm husbands and wives, use smaller amounts of the family income for clothing than is the case with those in the nineteen to twenty-four group.

While no statistics seem to be available, it is quite probable that the courtship years of middle-class urban people are not so definitely the years of highest expenditure for clothing. The farm family functions as a unit in this matter as in others. The family as a unit is more interested in garbing its representatives of the nineteen to twenty-four age group attractively than those of any other age period. The farm wife may look back to her "fine dresses" of courtship and marriage days and look ahead to aiding her daughter to present at least as attractive appearance at the proper time. Very largely, young people of the nineteen to twenty-four age group in the cities are not being supported from a common family pocketbook. They as individuals are earning their own money and spending it. They are looking ahead to higher wages and salaries than they are at the time earning. Young women are not thought to have married very well unless their husbands are able to furnish them with as fine and expensive clothing as they were accustomed to wear before their marriage. One of the main motives for work outside of the home by urban wives is to make it possible for them to wear finer clothing than the husband could pay for from his income.

The contrasts between standards of living of farmers and urbanites as regards the clothing item very nicely illustrates the difference in social

organization of the two groups. Farm life is characterized by family solidarity. Family interests demand that young people of the marriage age should present an attractive appearance to members of the opposite sex in order that satisfactory marriages be made. Urban life is quite largely an organization of individuals rather than of families, even in the case of those who are married. Individual interests demand that the individual shall make an attractive appearance to others of his group as long as he may have individual aspirations.

Farm families spend somewhat less for clothing, on the average, than do urban *industrial* families. The difference is not great. Kirkpatrick finds it to be about $11 per year.[1] It seems likely, however, that the statistics for the two groups are not strictly comparable. If the daughter in a farm family were to leave home for the city, as increasing numbers of them are doing, and begin to support herself, she would no longer be considered a member of the family from the standpoint of the statistical tables. Upon the other hand, if the daughter in a laborer's family is supporting herself entirely or in part by working outside of the home she may still reside with her parents because of convenience of location, in which case she is still considered a member of the parental family and what she earns and spends appears in the tables of family income and expenditure. Were the children of laborers to leave home when they go to work in the stores and offices and factories as generally as do the children of farmers when they take jobs of the same sort, it would quite surely appear that the families of laborers were spending less for clothing than is being spent by the families of farmers. The average clothing expense for laborers' families is kept low by the large proportion of this class that are existing in a poverty condition. Even if farmers do not dress as expensively as do members of the middle class in the city, they do almost without exception provide themselves with sufficient clothing to keep themselves comfortably clad, which is not always the case with the families of city laborers.

More of the clothing worn by the members of farm families is made in the home than is the case with city families. This would be expected because of the fact that farm wives cling in general more closely to traditional home activities than do the women of the cities. Garments are less expensive if made in the home instead of being purchased ready-made, provided the wife does not set too high a value upon her time. It is also thought by many farm wives that the quality of the material in ready-made garments is inferior to that in the garments which are made in the home. Unless the wife is unusually skilled in such matters, there is danger that the homemade garments will have a "homemade look" about them. With the chief emphasis, however, upon utility rather than upon attractiveness, it is not surprising that unskilled women persist in

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

doing a large amount of making of clothing, especially for young children. Then, too, there is little doubt that the quality of skill is being improved through aid from various sources intended to render the woman who wishes to make some of the family clothing more competent in the various detailed processes of selecting material and patterns, and in the cutting, fitting, and sewing involved in the manufacture of a garment.

Housing.—The house in which the typical farm family lives is large enough so that there is no undue crowding of the occupants. It is far enough from other buildings so that it is well surrounded with air and light, and with ground space which may be utilized for purposes of beautification. A large proportion of the urban labor class, and many urban middle-class families, are not so fortunately situated as regards these matters.

In other respects the typical farm home is less adequate for its purposes than are the dwellings of most city residents of whatever class. Certain points of inadequacy are the following:

1. Many farmhouses are too large to make the best sort of homes. Most of those now in existence were built some time ago when families were larger and building materials less expensive than is now the case. Consequently many houses contain some unused or seldom-used rooms. Such rooms are bound to detract from the home atmosphere that should characterize a dwelling. Rooms that are not lived in are worse than useless, because they diminish the cosiness and chill the warmth that inevitably characterize the good home. Such rooms go unheated in the winter, which makes their coldness in that season more than a mere figure of speech.

It is interesting to observe how the farmhouses grow gradually smaller as one travels from east to west through the northern states. The western houses are of course the newer ones, thus were built with smaller families in mind and higher building costs than determined the size of the older houses of the ancestral East. Florence E. Ward showed in her study of ten thousand farm homes of the northern and western states that if we think of the country as divided into three sections, the eastern, the central, and the western, that each step westward means the loss of two rooms or more. The houses in the eastern section have an average size of 9.7 rooms, those in the central section of 7.7 rooms and those of the western, of 5.3.[1]

2. An adequate home must satisfy aesthetic requirements as well as those of material utility. The typical farm home is inadequate from the aesthetic point of view. It is not in the least surprising that the American farming class should have developed much the same traditions regarding housing that they have come to hold regarding the function

[1] Ward, Florence E., "The Farm Woman's Problems," *Department Circular* 148, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., November, 1920.

of clothing. In both cases, it is utility that is stressed rather than beauty or attractiveness.

The surroundings of the typical farmhouse are far from beautiful. While most of the houses have shade trees or flowering shrubs, or both, planted in the immediate vicinity somewhere, very generally these trees and shrubs are not so arranged as to furnish an attractive picture to the passerby, or to impress the sensitive impartial observer with the joys of farm life. The lawn, or yard as it is more frequently called, is quite generally made of practical use as a place for poultry to run and as a parking area for tools and machinery when not in use, and sometimes the place is a veritable junk yard, covered with all sorts of odds and ends.

The house itself very frequently presents a most unattractive appearance, no thought apparently having been given to the aesthetic aspects of its architecture. In many cases, it was never painted, and in others the painting is altogether too infrequently renewed to keep the farm home from presenting a run-down appearance. One gains the impression either that the owners of such houses do not realize the value of paint, even as a preservative agent, or else that their occupation is so profitless that they are powerless to prevent the undue depreciation of property values caused by such neglect. Oftentimes the barns present a much greater air of prosperity than does the house, giving further evidence of a standard of living unbalanced in the direction of what the owner feels to be the greatest utility.

3. The best house is the one that contributes most to its occupants in the way of "living" values. It presents a maximum of opportunity for rest and recreation. The typical farmhouse is hindered from serving such a function to those who live there because of the various productive uses to which it is put. It is a place of work rather than of rest. The farm wife's labors are as completely agricultural in character as they are of a "home-making" sort, and the house is her workshop. Much work related to the occupation of farming is carried on within the house, and it serves too as the wife's point of departure for the garden and the poultry yard, and oftentimes for the barns and the fields. The husband is likely, also, to make the house a sort of annex to the barns and stables, doing more or less repair work there and using it as a storage place. The "home" function of the house is likely to be incidental to its function as a part of the occupational equipment.

4. The typical farmhouse is much more poorly supplied with modern conveniences than are the residences of most urban laborers. Miss Ward found in the study previously referred to that only 32 per cent of the farm homes surveyed were supplied with running water.[1] Only 21 per cent had any sort of modern lighting system. In the remaining 79 per cent of the homes considered, the women were obliged to care for

[1] *Ibid.*

kerosene lamps. Less than 10 per cent had a modern heating system, the remainder being partially heated by stoves, usually cared for by the women, with some rooms in the most of such houses never thoroughly warmed through during the course of a winter. Fifteen per cent of the houses were equipped with indoor toilet and 20 per cent with a bathtub.

The data for Miss Ward's study were collected in 1919. The study of the 2,886 farm families reported by Dr. Kirkpatrick is based upon the conditions obtaining in 1922–1924. He designates 6 per cent of the houses occupied by the families covered by his study as modern, 20 per cent as partially modern, and the remaining 74 per cent as not modern. A house to be modern, according to Kirkpatrick's definition, must be supplied with central heating and lighting systems and with running water, both hot and cold, for use in kitchen, bath, and toilet, accompanied with proper sewage disposal. A partly modern house is one that is supplied with any one of the three essentials of the completely modern house. Approximately three out of every four farmhouses, according to this classification, are completely unmodern.

5. The typical farmhouse is inadequate as a "home" from the standpoint of its furnishings. Most of the houses have enough pieces of furniture, such as they are, and some of them have far too many, which give a cluttered effect. There is generally lacking the harmony that should prevail. Individual articles of furniture which may be of real significance by themselves may persistently occupy important places in the furnishing scheme to the loss of the desirable consistency in the total effect. Practical utility being stressed, it is likely to be felt that, as long as there are plenty of chairs and tables and beds, of whatever sort they may be as long as they are capable of serving the purposes of chairs and tables and beds, it would be unduly extravagant to discard mismated pieces in favor of new suites of harmonious design.

The 2,886 families spent on the average $40 a year for house furnishings and equipment, as compared with an average expenditure of nearly twice that amount reported for the families of urban laborers in a study carried on by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and referred to by Dr. Kirkpatrick.[1] The greater solidarity of the farm families as compared with the urban makes it more natural for the farmer to be content to use pieces of furniture that have been handed down from previous generations. This fact must be partially responsible for the relatively small amount spent annually by farmers for new things. A second, and possibly more important, factor consists in the fact, so frequently alluded to, that the farmer's traditions lead him to stress utility over aesthetic appeal more than is the case with any other element of the population.

[1] KIRKPATRICK, E. L., *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, p. 140, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1926.

Most farmers would probably say that their housing costs them nothing. They own or rent the farm which they are occupying, and the houses merely go along with the land, just as do the other buildings located thereon. The city resident possibly owns a "house and lot." The farmer, upon the other hand, owns a "farm with a house on it." It is a business or means of livelihood which the farmer thinks primarily of himself as owning. The home is merely incidental. If our previous discussion concerning the use of a farmhouse be sound, the "home uses" of the house are very largely subordinated to its uses as a part of the productive equipment. Nevertheless the house does have a certain value as a home to the people who occupy it. Should they move to the city, they would be obliged to pay quite definitely in one way or another for a place in which to live. While they remain on the farm, the farm must be thought of as contributing to them a certain part of their cost of living to be known as house rental. Just as truly as the farm provides the family with some of its food and some of its fuel, it also provides the family with residence accommodations.

From the very nature of the situation, the amount the farm should be credited with for house rental cannot be determined with any high degree of precision. There are various arbitrary methods of arriving at an amount that may be thought of as the cost of house rental. The method most frequently used is to take 10 per cent of the estimated value of the house as the amount of the annual rent. In the case of the study of the 2,886 families, this was the method used, and the average annual house rent thus determined was $200, or 12.5 per cent of $1,598, the total cost of living.

Health.—Such studies as have been made indicate that the average annual expenditure for health purposes is about the same for farm families as for those of urban laborers. Dr. Kirkpatrick's study of 2,886 families showed an average annual expense of $62.[1] Other studies of more limited scope have shown both higher and lower averages than this amount. A study of 12,096 families of laborers, mentioned by Kirkpatrick, showed an average annual health expense of $60.

There is good reason to believe that the families of city dwellers for the same amount of money expended get more health service than do the families of farmers. For one thing, farmers live a greater average distance from the doctor than do city people, and doctors' charges vary generally with the distances they must travel. If a farm family lives 10 miles from their physician and if he charges a dollar a mile, as is at least frequently the practice, each visit calls for an expenditure of $10, an amount much greater than the family in the city would be obliged to pay. Confinements, at an average cost possibly of $25, are included among the items of health expenditure. As the number of births, there-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 164.

fore of confinement cases, is greater among farmers than among city dwellers, and as the expense for these cases is not, properly speaking, incurred on account of bad health, the amount of *health* service which the farmer gets for his $60 paid to doctors and nurses dwindles still further.

There is also the further fact that people of the cities are much better supplied with public health services of various kinds than are those living on farms. Various health laws are enforced in the city, which either do not apply to the farming districts or are less carefully enforced there. People of the cities also have more ready access to clinics of various kinds than do farmers, and they live more completely under the influence of organizations which carry on well-supported programs for the prevention and cure of disease.

The conclusion is inevitable that city families, even of the hand-laboring class, receive a much greater average annual amount of health service, both public and private, than that received by farmers. In view of this conclusion, one may believe either that the farmers, because of more healthful conditions of living, do not stand in as great need of health service, or that they, because of the backward social situation in which they find themselves, are suffering neglect in the field of health care. The truth of the matter quite probably cannot be stated in sufficiently general terms to include all families of farmers.

The country has certain great health advantages. Many people who live in the country seem to be able to derive the maximum benefit from the advantages to be found there, and, at the same time, to be well enough informed or lucky enough to protect their health at a minimum of expense against the disadvantageous health factors in a farm environment. They may have constitutions that are unusually rugged and thus suffer no apparent harm from the exposure incident to outdoor work under highly variable and rapidly changing climatic conditions. They benefit from the fresh air and the sunlight. They possibly sleep in well-ventilated rooms both summer and winter. Their houses are well screened to protect their food from flies and other disease-laden insects. They have adequate sewage disposal. The water that they drink is actually pure and health-giving, which very often is not the case with the so-called "pure" water of the country. The milk does not chance to come from tubercular cows. And it is so cared for that it does not become a health menace. Either through instruction or chance, they have developed healthful dietary habits. Their work is so organized that they are not subject to periods of excessive strain or overwork, or their physiques are such that they can withstand without injury what would constitute excessive strain for others less rugged. They are skillful enough or fortunate enough to avoid accidental injury. They have such a mental make-up and outlook that they do not suffer from worry. There are farm families that live for years in a state of well-nigh

perfect health, with no occasion whatever during that period for the expenditure of any money in payment for medicine or for the services of a physician.

Upon the other hand, there are great numbers of farming people who do not enjoy good health. They are not so rugged by nature as the others, or they are less well informed or less careful or less fortunately situated. Their health is poor, owing to certain causes in their life situation. Most of these unhealthy farm people do not get the quantity and quality of service from our health experts that is to be looked for in a twentieth century American standard of living.

Some of the reasons for the backwardness of farmers in their care of health are not at all difficult to see. In the first place, traditionally they are not prepared to demand good health for themselves and families. As long as their physical condition is such that they can continue at work, they are likely to see no reason for complaint. In health, as in every other item of the standard of living, the emphasis is upon utility rather than upon beauty or pleasantness. Their bodies are conceived to be theirs to work with rather than to be enjoyed. If they chance to be endowed with bounding, exuberant health, well and good; if not, to set about attempting to develop such a state of physical well-being through the expenditure of money in payment for the advice and services of physicians and other health experts would seem to a great many farmers to be wasteful extravagance. It would come under the same category as extra expenditure for clothing in order that they might wear fabrics soft to the touch and pleasing to the eye—all right for city folk if they can afford it, but not the sort of thing that a farmer or a farmer's wife needs.

While the farmer stresses utility, he is not sufficiently well informed to realize that there is very real danger that the aches and pains to which he is subject and which he tends to neglect may shorten his working days, if not his life. He does not know the relation between comfort and utility as regards his physical body. From early childhood on, the group influences which have played upon him have led him to disregard pain. He has been taught that minor physical ailments are to be endured without complaint, rather than to be made the object of solicitude and "coddling," and he passes on this point of view to his children and others who come under his influence. There is much of the primitive in the farmer's traditional attitude toward physical discomfort, much of the stoicism that is said to have characterized the attitude of the savage ancestors of the human race.

The tendency for the individual to belittle and ignore physical discomfort is interesting to consider from the point of view of family solidarity. The farm wife, especially, is in many cases so completely submerged in the family whole that it never occurs to her that she is entitled to any thing in the way of individual comfort or happiness or

fullness of life. Whether the more completely individualized women of the urban middle classes live on the average longer lives than do the family-submerged women of the farms, the available statistical studies do not reveal. There is little doubt, however, that the later years of life of the former group are freer from invalidism than is the case with the women of the farms.

Another difficulty in the case of the farmer and the farm wife consists in the nature of their relationship to their work. For the undertaking to proceed at all normally, both must be pretty constantly on duty during at least a good part of the year. Even if one or the other is conscious of physical ailments that seem to call for attention, there is a quite natural reluctance to leave the work routine to go away for examination to be followed possibly by treatments or rest. The work of the farm for both men and women is somewhat of the nature of the treadmill. The machinery must be kept going, and there is likely to be no easy way of keeping it going unless all workers stay in their accustomed places. In the individualized organization of urban life, the larger share of the workers are so situated that they may absent themselves from their tasks for a few days or weeks or even months without throwing the undertakings with which they are connected so completely out of gear, and this is true even though the workers in question may occupy important places. Stores and factories and schools and offices are of such a nature that, like certain machines, parts may be taken out temporarily for repair, substitute parts being installed in order that operations may not cease. Nearly every farm, upon the other hand, is so completely identified with the particular persons who operate it, and the relation of worker to worker is a matter of such nice adjustment that lay-offs in a busy season are likely to be disastrous. This is one important reason why so many farmers and their wives keep steadily at their work until there is a complete breakdown upon the part of one or the other, which necessitates retirement from the farm. After these retired farmers have gotten to the village, their medical bills are likely to be higher than they were before. The health expenses of retired farmers, however, do not raise the average of the farm-health item.

As yet, farm children in the schools come relatively little under the observation of health experts who at present are doing so much for the health of urban children. Apparently children of the farms have more than their share of physical defects. Because in general no competent person in authority is responsible for examining these children and recommending treatment, their defective eyesight or hearing or respiration or whatever it may be is allowed to persist, and this neglect accounts in part for the farmer's low-average health expense.

In conclusion, it may be said that the farm family gets less health attention than the families even of the city laboring class because of

the more primitive, or less highly individualized, nature of their life. Their life is less highly individualized than that of the cities in part because of the nature of their occupation as now conducted, with its emphasis upon family solidarity and the stressing of traditional attitudes. This low level of individualization as regards health care is also in part due to the relative absence in rural areas of health organizations and experts whose function it is to find ailing individuals and to see that these people get the individualized attention which they need to set them on the road to recovery and health.

Education.—Quite consistently the traditional attitude held by farming people toward education stresses its utilitarian or vocational aspect. Many is the farmer who would say that schooling carried beyond the three R's is of little use to the one who is going to remain on the farm, and who would advocate the narrowest sort of specialization for those who wish to prepare for another occupation. The conception of education as a preparation for rich living is an idea that farmers in general are not prepared to understand and it is not difficult to account for the attitudes prevailingly held.

The nature of the farmer's relation to his work, the solidarity of his family life, and the high degree of his isolation from culture centers have kept him thinking largely in material terms. Many of the most successful farmers of his acquaintance possess very little in the way of cultural education, some of them possessing little formal education of any sort. In almost every agricultural community, lives at least one farmer who has the reputation of being well educated, along with an equally deserved reputation of being a poor farmer. Such a one may serve for miles around as a living example of the uselessness of education—in the minds of those who can appreciate the value of learning only in its utilitarian aspects. While such attitudes are undergoing change, the same social forces which are responsible for the development of a changing attitude toward the value of education are at the same time bringing in other more or less unsettling alterations in the farmer's scale of values as touching his relationship toward life at various points.

The amount of formal education possessed by the parents is bound to be largely influential in determining their attitudes toward the question of the kind and amount of education to be desired for their children. In the study of 2,886 families conducted by Kirkpatrick, of those who furnished information covering this point (2,350 operators, 2,450 home makers), 12 per cent of the operators and 8 per cent of the home makers had acquired no more than four grades of schooling; 60 per cent of the former and 55 per cent of the latter dropped out of school somewhere between the fifth and the completion of the eighth grade; 22 per cent of the former and 31 per cent of the latter had at least some high-school education to their credit but had gone no further than high-school gradua-

tion; 6 per cent of each had gone beyond the high school.[1] It should be noted that more of both sexes dropped out of school at some point during the first four grades than continued their education beyond high-school graduation. Why more than 500 operators and more than 400 home makers failed to report on this item is not indicated. It may be surmised, however, that those failing to report had attended school comparatively little. The suspicion that this is the case is strengthened by the fact that reports were secured from a hundred more women than men in answer to this question and the women, on the average, had more to report than the men.

The average amount spent annually for formal education by the 2,886 families was $37.90. Some families, having no children in school, spent nothing; some paying the way of children in college spent several hundreds. Most of the families included in the study fell into neither of these two extreme categories but spent something for school books and other supplies for children in elementary or high school; some of them were paying for the support of children living away from home in attendance at high school; and some were obliged to pay for tuition. Amounts paid for lessons in music and other subjects in which the teacher is paid directly by the pupil are included in the average total of $37.90. Possibly less than is the case with any other item, this average annual family expense for formal education is indicative of the situation as concerns the typical family. The average is made as high as it is by the large amounts paid by comparatively few families, the greater number paying considerably less than the average.

Amounts paid for books and magazines and other reading material may also be classified under the heading of education. The average amount spent for reading material other than school books by the 2,886 farm families was $11.20.

Religion.—The study of 2,886 families showed an average annual expenditure of $28 per family for contributions to church and Sunday school, including missions.[2] As about 20 per cent of the total number reported no expenditure for the support of organized religion, the average amount for those who did contribute was in the neighborhood of $35 per year.

Comparison of farmers with urban laboring families indicates that relatively more families of farmers are making contributions for church purposes than is the case with urban laborers and that the average amount contributed is higher in the case of farmers. Rural churches are so small, however, in comparison with those of the cities that the service they render is generally of poorer quality than is that of the urban church.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 186.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

The level of the standard of living in this field must be judged in terms of what is received in the way of inspiring religious services and the like. The total annual expense of the organization, including minister's salary, and the expenses for music and other essentials of the religious service and for other items connected with an effective church program is the only objective measure of its value. In spite of the fact that the farmer pays more on the average than the urban laborer, the rural institutional equipment of religion is relatively inadequate.

Recreation.—With farming people the expense for recreation is less, on the average, than is that for the support of religious institutions. This is not the case with any urban class. The 2,886 families reported by Kirkpatrick spent on the average $22.50 for their recreation, which indicates an average family expense in this field of less than $0.50 a week.[1]

A tremendous amount is spent annually in the United States for commercialized recreation. Theaters, motion pictures, concerts, and athletic contests are exceedingly well supported in the country as a whole. America may be said to take its amusements very seriously. The great farming population of America, however, has relatively little part in this, by way of sharing either the expense or the pleasure to be derived therefrom. It has sometimes been said that, while the people of the city pay to be amused and entertained, those of the farm amuse and entertain themselves in inexpensive ways. The truth of the matter is, however, that recreation, whether homemade or purchased, occupies a very much smaller place in the farmer's program than is the case with that of the city dweller. While it may be argued that many urbanites overdo the recreational aspects of life, it is at least as true that the standard of living of farming people in general is inadequately developed in its recreational phases.

Social Contacts and Advancement.—It is obvious that not all of the social contacts which an individual makes are influences toward advancement. It is equally obvious that the individual's progressive development, or advancement in the direction of well-rounded personality, is dependent very largely upon the securing of a variety of suitable social contacts. A person cannot be truly cultured whose source of ideas is narrowly limited geographically or socially. A broad culture, in the direction of which genuine social advancement always leads, is the very antithesis of provincialism. No local community or occupational class can be sufficient unto itself if the desirable program for the individual be thought of as a true personal advancement in the direction of depth of human insight and breadth of genuine culture.

Expenses for education in its various phases, religion, and recreation—in short, for all items thought of as being mental or spiritual in significance

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 193.

rather than physical or material—are quite generally grouped under the heading "advancement." It is perfectly plain that formalism may enter the various institutions representing each of the above interests to such an extent as to render them of little real value from the standpoint of actual social advancement, as considered in the preceding paragraph. Even if the individual be receiving as vital a contribution as could be hoped for from each of these sources, there is a need for other contacts, possibly of more informal character, to be derived through association with diverse personalities.

Farming people are as a class more shut off from desirable stimulating and broadening influences of the sort mentioned than any other great population group in our society. In addition to the important isolating forces of geographical location, there are others which at the present time are probably of still greater importance, namely, the nature of the occupation itself and the high degree of family solidarity which is traditional in the farming class.

Raising the Farmer's Standard of Living

The two most important services any individual may perform for another are (1) to awaken in the other person a desire for certain good things in life for which he has not previously cared and (2) to aid him to find a way to secure for himself these good things. To elevate any specific farm-family standard of living might involve either one or both of these services. Farmers with lower standards of living than could possibly be justified on the basis of what seemed to be their inherent capacities for richly enjoying what life has to offer may be thought of as divided into three groups. (1) One large group is composed of those who give no indication of desiring a higher standard of living than that which they actually maintain; furthermore their annual income is insufficient to provide them with a higher standard in case they desired one. (2) Those of another group desire various fine things which they cannot afford to buy. (3) Those of the remaining group are financially able to live on an appreciably higher plane than the one they occupy. Many of these people assume the attitude of a miser toward whatever surplus money they may be able to accumulate. Others are forever stressing production, buying more land or more equipment. In either case, these men and their families are living mentally and spiritually starved lives.

The new agencies of communication which serve to bring the higher standards of living of the city more fully to the attention of farming people are thus indirectly responsible for elevating the desired standards of great numbers of people on farms. Such influences naturally work much more powerfully on the young people than on their parents. This

is true for two reasons. In the first place, the young, in general, are more mobile than their elders, taking longer and more frequent trips away from the home community and thus coming more into contact with the new things to be found in the outside world. In the second place, just because they are young, their natures are more plastic than are the natures of those who are older. They are relatively ready to demand new things, possibly involving radically modified ways of living. Every year in America great numbers of these young people leave their farm homes permanently for the cities in their attempt to realize for themselves higher standards of living than they think could be theirs on the farm.

Elevating the farm standard of living is actually a very different process in a society in which the farmer may leave his occupation from what it would be in one in which he was permanently tied in some way to the soil. The farming class even in America is relatively immobile, but this relative immobility is pretty completely a mental condition. The same social influences that fill a farmer's mind with new ambitions in the direction of achieving certain desirable life values for himself and family may at the same time carry him away from his home and occupation and into the city. The agricultural extension worker is likely to ask himself, "Just what should Mr. Blank, the *farmer*, be aided to get out of life?" Mr. Blank, the farmer, upon the other hand, if he comes under the influence of a rich stream of stimulating ideas, is likely to ask himself, "Just what should I, the *man*, be getting out of life?" The fact that great numbers of farmers think of themselves first of all as men and only secondarily as farmers contributes much to the elevation of the standards of living of individuals who were born on farms; but, through the selective process involved, it may mean the development of a farming population relatively more and more resistant to the forces of change.

To phrase the discussion of the preceding paragraph in different words, one may say that it is one thing to elevate the individual farmer's standard of living and a quite different thing to raise the standard of living of the farmer class. If the individual farmer accepts in any thoroughgoing way for himself the life values that are cherished by middle-class urban people, he is likely to become a middle-class urban man himself, if he finds it possible; if the way is not open for this, he will do what he can to aid his children to fit themselves for successful urban life. He may in the latter case remain on the farm himself, or he may join the ranks of the city laborers, taking whichever course seems best to him for the sake of his children. It is easy to believe that the selective process set up in farming communities under the influence of the increasing impact of urban ideas results in the building up on the farms of a population that is relatively impervious to new ideas regarding desirable standards of living. Anyone, serving in whatever position of leadership, who desires, upon the one hand, to aid the farmer to accept for himself

a progressive standard of living and, upon the other hand, to keep the farmer on his farm, is taking upon himself a peculiarly difficult task—so difficult in fact that he is likely to feel himself obliged to stress one of the two phases of his program at the expense of the other. He may come to think almost exclusively in broadly human terms, caring little whether the farmer remains in the country or not; or he may talk of developing standards of living consistent with rural life, by which he means standards in harmony with the traditional family-farm scheme of things, which necessarily sets fairly narrow limits to the scope of one's social development.

The family-farm operator, while still remaining on his farm, may elevate his living standards at many points, if his income can be made sufficiently high. He may build himself a new and modern dwelling, furnish it in good taste, and hang real works of art upon the walls. He may accumulate a library of well-chosen volumes and subscribe to some of the better magazines. He may hire labor for both the field and the house that he and his wife may have leisure to enjoy reading and music and recreation of varied types. He may give his children the best of educational opportunities, paying for their support away from home if the school in his home community is inadequate. Many farmers are doing all of these things and more and at the same time are glorying in the advantages of country living. The economic situation of agriculture, however, is such as to prevent the great majority of people on farms from enjoying these good things, however much they may be desired. Agricultural economists are agreed that *the heightened standard of living, which farmers have developed since the war, has been paid for in considerable part out of capital, income being insufficient to cover the cost.* Buildings and land have been allowed to depreciate and mortgage indebtedness has been allowed to increase that the owners and their families might enjoy expensive cars and radios.

In general, if farmers' standards of living are to be improved, it will be done through the same means that other people's living standards are raised, namely, through heightened income or falling birth rate, or through some combination of the two. It is usually possible to accomplish something through improved handling of existing incomes. Greater economy in buying can be learned, as can better methods of preparing the food which the fields and the garden make available. In general, however, significant advances are dependent upon the securing of greater purchasing power from income or diminishing the number of children to be clothed, educated, and provided with desirable recreational facilities. If the family is to use only $1,598 worth of goods a year, the average amount used by the 2,886 families above referred to, it would seem, at first thought, that all members of the family would be better provided for if there were but two children instead of five or six.

Size of Family and Standard of Living

There is considerable reason to believe that the "first thought" referred to in the last sentence is fallacious. There would not be $1,598 worth of goods to use on the average farm were there no children in the family helping to provide that amount. In the traditional family-farm organization, children up to a certain number are probably an economic asset. Just where diminishing returns set in as regards number of children cannot be stated with definiteness. Parental ideas regarding proper treatment of children and other factors are important influences in determining the number in any given case. Professor Thaden concludes on the basis of his study that the proportion of expenditures for advancement to total expenditures is lowest for those families, who own their farms, who have "few or no children or with no children at home," and that it gradually increases "until those with five children are reached."[1] The explanation seems to be that each additional child on the average up to the number of five, in the case of this study, adds enough to the total productive capacity of the family labor force to provide for his own necessities and some surplus to augment the amount available for the non-physiological demands of the family.

Dr. Kirkpatrick, on the basis of his study previously referred to, concludes that, while each individual child up to the number of six involved on the average an additional family cost per annum of $140, the total expenditures are not increased enough for the large families "to provide as high a standard of living for the large families as for the small families."[2]

Ideas regarding the sort and amount of work which should be expected of children vary so much from farm to farm that no general statement regarding the actual influence of children upon the family standard of living can at the present time have much validity. Those farm parents—and there are many of them—who get somewhere near the maximum amount of labor values out of their children have good reason to believe that each additional child up to a certain number means an additional source of family income. The family-farm unit succeeds best from the standpoint of production in those cases where the family is fairly large. According to traditional family-farm ideals, the standard of living is undoubtedly higher in the cases of those fairly large families.

At the same time, there are farm parents whose ideas regarding the proper treatment of children harmonize perfectly with the most modern thought on the subject. The question all of the time with such parents concerns the quality of the children they are rearing, rather than their labor value. It is quite surely as true on the farm as elsewhere that, when

[1] Thaden, J. F., "Standards of Living on Iowa Farms," *Bulletin* 238, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, 1926.

[2] Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

quality is stressed, large numbers of children are, in general, not to be desired. If the child is to receive what he should have for the sake of his best development in the nature of educational and recreational opportunities, he will not pay his way, whether his home be in the city or on the farm. Every additional child who does not pay his way obviously becomes an added family expense. If children are to be viewed as economic liabilities rather than assets, families with moderate incomes, out of fairness to all concerned, should have few children rather than many.

In attacking the farmer's standard of living from the standpoint of size of family, it would seem that the first step should be the development of the idea that those families whose young children accomplish enough work to pay their way are living on a low standard, however high the family income may thereby become. The second step will follow easily. If the elimination of child labor in itself makes a rise in the family standard of living, the limitation of the number of children to be provided for from the family income is demanded next, in order that the share of each may become larger than it could otherwise be.

Professor von Tungeln has made a frequently quoted statement as follows: "Perhaps the time has now arrived to teach the farmer, or for the farmer to teach himself, to produce only two children per family where now he is producing four or more."[1] Farm families, as surely as urban families, will come to limit the number of their children to one or two or three when they have first come to look upon each child as an economic liability rather than an asset. The changed point of view regarding the place of children on the farm is evidently more difficult to bring about than the determination to limit the number after the new point of view has been taken. There is some reason to believe that the new view cannot be made at all generally to prevail while the family-farm system remains dominant in agriculture. The farms may remain largely in the hands of those with large-family and child-labor ideals as at present, while farmers with small-family ideals will tend to migrate to the cities. In any case, however, those who hope for better social conditions among America's farming population cannot look with complacency, as is so generally done, upon the farming districts of the country as an inexhaustible source of population resources for the cities. Ideally, farm communities would so stress quality of child care that numbers would necessarily be limited to such a point that there would be no surplus of young people to furnish the cities with cheap labor.

High Standards of Living versus Family-farm Institution

The greatest obstacle which advancing standards are forced to face in the agricultural community is the family-farm economic unit. The

[1] Von Tungeln, George H., "The Solution—Two Children?" *Farm Journal,* quoted from in *Rural America,* December, 1927.

very nature of the institution is such as to tend to perpetuate standards of life that are low when compared with the standards in general maintained by non-farm people of the middle class. A high American standard of living demands individualized child care and training, each child to be thought of as an immature personality that should be accorded every possible aid toward development into the most efficient adulthood; the family-farm institution demands the subordination of the child to the group, involving his labor while still a child for the sake of the economic success of the family unit. A high American standard of living demands that married women shall experience a large measure of individual freedom of choice as to how they shall spend their thought and their time; the family-farm institution demands that the thought and the time of the wife shall be almost completely taken up with family matters, that her significance as an individual woman be very definitely overshadowed by her significance as a cog in the family machine. A high American standard of living demands that those who labor shall have considerable time and opportunity for recreation; the family-farm institution demands that the hours of work shall be long and that the worker shall be tired enough when night comes, at least in the busy season, so that he has little disposition for recreating diversion. A high American standard of living demands that one's place of residence be a home, a place of retreat from the grind of the day; the family-farm institution demands that the home function of the house shall be subordinated to its occupational uses.

Individual farm families may liberate themselves from any or all of the above-mentioned and other hindrances to the attainment of a normally high American standard of living. The point is, however, that family-farm tradition and the exigencies of the situation in which the family finds itself are strongly set against such liberation. Those who tend to revolt against family-farm traditions are apt to find it easier to achieve their desired standards of living through migration from the farm than through continuing upon it in a spirit of nonconformity.

Much is now being done within the limits of family-farm *mores* to enrich the experience of living of the agricultural population. With the maximum advancement possible to be achieved within these limits, the student may take either one of two attitudes toward the results. He may consider farm life separately and conclude that much has been accomplished. He may, upon the other hand, view American social life as a whole and conclude that the standard of living of the farming population, judged from the point of view of the opportunity afforded each individual to make the most of his unique self, by way both of self-expression and of service to the larger society, must of necessity be lower than that of the non-farming population of no greater natural capacity.

CHAPTER IX

FARM POPULATION (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FACTOR OF MIGRATION)

The primary purpose of this chapter is to view the rural, more especially the agricultural, population of the United States from the point of view of its numbers and characteristics as affected by migration. Incidentally, the city population will be considered as well. Migrating streams are flowing in both directions between farm and city. How are the populations of both farms and cities affected by these constantly flowing streams? What is the nature of the forces, both repellent and attractive, that carry the individual or the family from farm to city and to a lesser extent from city to farm? In each case what sort of individuals largely makes up the migrating stream as regards age and sex and psychological nature? What are the social results to both country and city of the net migration cityward? To what extent is the rapid growth of the American city due to the influx of the farm-born? The answers to some of these questions are more easy to arrive at than others. In certain cases decisive answers, if ever reached, must wait until more detailed study in this field has been accomplished.

Distinction between Rural and Urban

For statistical purposes, arbitrary lines of distinction must be drawn between rural and urban. At present, the line is drawn at a population of 2,500. In other words, the urban people of the United States are all those who live in incorporated places having populations of 2,500 or more and, in addition to these, those inhabitants of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island who live in "towns" having populations of 2,500 or more. All others, including those who live in the open country and in small towns, are rural people. In the past, other divisions have been used: in the first census reports, 8,000 was taken as the minimum population of an urban community, and more recently, 4,000.

It contributes little toward understanding a person to be told the size of the community in which he lives. It is difficult to see what, if any, vital purpose is served by a rural-urban division. A person's occupation is, upon the other hand, an important fact. The numbers of the farming population and their changing ratio to that of the population of the United States as a whole are a matter of decided interest from the

standpoint of rural sociology. The census reports for 1920 give, for the first time, a separate enumeration of farmers. In 1925 a farm census was taken, which, while lacking the detailed information of the 1920 report, is also of great value.

Numbers of Rural Population

According to the 1920 census, the total rural population of the United States was 51,406,017. This number is 48.6 per cent of the total population of 105,710,620. For the first time in our history the number called rural was smaller than the number called urban. If either 2,000 or 3,000 had been selected as the dividing line between rural and urban instead of 2,500, the time of the arrival of urban numerical supremacy would have been accordingly hastened or delayed.

Of farming people, there was in 1920 a total of 31,614,269, or 61 per cent of the rural population, and about 30 (29.9) per cent of the population of the entire country. The non-farm 39 percentage of the rural population was divided between rural industrialists, including lumbermen, miners, etc. (21.5 per cent), and villagers (17.5 per cent).

The following table[1] shows the number of people on American farms, the numbers for 1920 and 1925 having been arrived at by enumeration, and for the remainder of the years by estimate, either of the Federal Census Bureau or of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Table III.—Farm Population in the United States

Date	Number
January 1, 1910	32,076,960
January 1, 1920	31,614,269
January 1, 1921	30,600,000
January 1, 1922	30,200,000
January 1, 1923	29,800,000
January 1, 1924	29,400,000
January 1, 1925	28,981,668
January 1, 1926	28,541,000
January 1, 1927	27,892,000
January 1, 1928	27,699,000
January 1, 1929	27,491,000
January 1, 1930	27,222,000

The above table indicates a loss in farm population for the ten-year period of 1920–1930 of more than 4,000,000 or an average net loss of more than 400,000 a year. Obviously, a loss occurs through the fact that the numbers leaving the farms through death or migration are greater than the numbers coming to the farms through birth or migration. Since many more are being added to the farm population through birth than are lost through death, the net loss through migration must be

[1] Galpin, C. J., in *The Agricultural Situation*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., April 1, 1930.

considerably more than 400,000 a year. The natural increase of the farm population, or the excess of births over deaths, for the year 1929, according to the estimate of the Department of Agriculture was 350,000, the estimated number of births being 631,000, and of deaths, 281,000. The Department of Agriculture estimates appearing in the following table show the loss to the farm population due to excess migration from the farm during recent years.[1]

TABLE IV.—MOVEMENTS TO AND FROM FARMS
(Births and deaths not taken into account)

During	Persons leaving farms for cities	Persons arriving at farms from cities	Net movement from farms to city
1922	2,000,000	880,000	1,120,000
1924	2,075,000	1,396,000	679,000
1925	1,900,000	1,066,000	834,000
1926	2,155,000	1,135,000	1,020,000
1927	1,978,000	1,374,000	604,000
1928	1,960,000	1,362,000	598,000
1929	1,876,000	1,257,000	619,000

In 1929, according to the above estimate, the number of migrants in each direction was less than in either 1927 or 1928, but the net movement from the farms to the cities was greater than in either of those years. The lowest net annual movement to the cities, occurring in the seven years for which estimates are given (in 1928) amounted to a total of practically 600,000 people, a number sufficiently large, if it were concentrated in one place, to make a city the size of Pittsburgh (1920).

In order to picture the migrating streams as vividly as possible, the entire farming population of the United States at the beginning of the year 1929 may be imagined to be organized into groups of a certain constituency, each of which numbered exactly 15 people of both sexes and of various ages. January 1, 1929, there were approximately 27,500,000 people living on American farms, enough to constitute 1,833,333 groups of 15 each. Before January 1, 1930, 1,880,000 individuals, in round numbers, left their farm homes to live in some town or city. In other words, during the year 1929, every one of the imaginary small groups would have lost 1 of its members before the close of the year, and about 50,000 of them would have lost 2. The estimate of the Department of Agriculture given earlier in the chapter shows that about 281,000 of the groups lost 1 member each by death, as well as losing 1 by migration. Also, 631,000 groups gained 1 member each by birth, and 1,257,000 gained 1 each by migration from the city. The year closed with most of the groups numbering 15 members each, the same size with which they

[1] GALPIN, C. J., in *The Agricultural Situation*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., April 1, 1930.

started, migrants from the city and births equaling the number of those who migrated to the city or died. During the year, 269,000 groups, however, suffered a net loss of 1 member each, finishing with 14.

The small groups being considered may be taken as representing the average situation for the year. Three, four, or five neighboring families would total fifteen individuals. One and possibly two of the individuals left for the city; possibly one came from the city. The possibility is about half as great that the total number was increased by one through birth as through migration from the city; the possibility is less than half as great that the number was reduced by one through death as that it was increased by one through birth. Thus the group finished the year with fifteen or fourteen individuals. Obviously most groups of neighboring families varied from the average in one direction or the other. Some such groups lost one or two whole families from their number, their houses and possibly their farms being abandoned. Other such groups went through the year with membership unchanged. Still others experienced a net gain through birth or migration or both.

Continuing to think of the group of fifteen and anticipating the more detailed discussion which is to follow, one may summarize in a brief way some of the things that are known, or at least conjectured, about the one who left the farm. In most of the cases the one who left for the city from the group of fifteen was a young person; in more than half of the cases he was ten years old or older but not yet twenty, for the most part being between fifteen and nineteen.[1] This young person was more often a girl than a boy. The average age of the young women who went to the city was somewhat lower than that of the young men migrants. The one who went is not known to be of either higher or lower mentality than the average of those who remained behind. It is reasonably sure, however, that he or she, on the average, possessed certain personality traits that distinguished him or her from others of the same age and sex who did not go. The person who went, however, was not necessarily to any marked degree a nonconformist, for the same processes of migration to and from the city which took place in 1929 have been going on for years. The typical little group of fifteen, which, by the way, numbered seventeen or eighteen in 1920, has on the average been losing during the last ten years more than a member a year to the city and has during the same time been receiving from the city more than an average of one person every two years. Thus the one who left the group in 1929 was more or less familiar with the city through relatives and former neighbors who were already established there and through former city residents who had come to live in the farm community. Then, too, a great many farm people begin working in the city in a tentative way before leaving their farm homes, thus making the break from the farm a gradual one.

[1] HART, HORNELL, "Selective Migration," *University of Iowa Studies*, 1921.

A well-scattered sample of 45,000 farm families showed, in the United States Census of 1920, that 10 per cent of all persons living on farms who were gainfully employed in some occupation were so employed in non-agricultural occupations. This can only mean that already living on the farms of the United States as members with the family that is engaged in agriculture is a considerable number of persons who are connected in surrounding towns and cities with what may be called city work.[1]

Very likely owing to the improvement in means of transportation and communication in the last ten years, the number of farm residents at work in the cities is somewhat greater now than it was in 1920.

Reasons for the Cityward Migration

Two questions arise here: (1) What are the factors impelling different individuals and families to leave the farms for the city? (2) Why have so many left annually for the past several years as to bring about a constantly declining farm population, absolutely as well as relatively?

Of these two questions, the second is the more briefly answered. Economic factors, operating somewhat tardily in this case, tend to bring about an equilibrium in numbers between the producers and consumers of food. The advent of labor-saving agricultural machinery and the adoption of improved farm methods make it possible for fewer producers at the present time to raise actually more food than a considerably larger number of producers were able to raise in the past. It has been possible even to reduce the number of acres of land that are in use for farming purposes. According to the 1925 Farm Census, during the preceding 5 years, the decrease of total acreage in farms amounted to 3.3 per cent. If this decrease brought about merely a corresponding decrease in farm population, it would account for the loss of more than a million farming people during that period. Then, again, farms are on the average becoming somewhat larger, through the process of consolidation; in many cases, two farms are united to form one, thus displacing one farm family. Thus, the picture is one of a decreasing acreage in farms, accompanied by a declining number of farms to a given acreage, with each farm on the average needing the labor of fewer hands. Therefore the great migration to the cities is that of surplus farm-born individuals who have been made "surplus" by the action of economic forces.

The situation faced by the individual migrant in most cases is not nearly so simple. He may not realize that there are too many farmers. He may not be conscious of the great underlying economic drive that is working toward an equilibrium. He may, in fact, by going to the city be deliberately sacrificing what he thinks to be his best economic prospects.

[1] Galpin, C. J., in *The Agricultural Situation*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., April 1, 1930.

It has been the custom to say that farm young people were drawn to the city because of its superficial glitter and glamour. The farm has been prose for them, while they yearn for poetry. While there is undoubtedly some truth in such assertions, the matter is nowhere nearly so simple as such statements seem to imply. Owing to the increasing knowledge of urban life among country people at the present time, superficialities are counting less and less. Farm-city migrants must be given credit, in general, for knowing pretty well where they are going.

Most of those who go are young. They are at the age of selecting an occupation. The occupation they are choosing takes them to the city. The issue with them may not be primarily rural *versus* urban, but rather farming *versus* some other occupation. The older people have previously become established. For them to go, in general, involves a change in occupation. While men and women of all ages are among the farm-city migrants, it is to be expected that those of high-school years and a little older will number much more than half of the total number going.

Some of those who go, as has been remarked, are simply on the way to an occupation which they prefer to that of agriculture, at least as it is conducted under the family-farm system—and this whether or not they think of the chosen occupation as offering a better economic future for them than would the farm. Others, however, are practically forced off the home farm by economic pressure. There may be several children in the family and no opportunity for all of them to remain at home and earn enough to pay their way in accordance with what they feel to be a reasonable standard of living. The farm may be incapable of supporting even one grown son until the time the parents think themselves to be old enough or financially able to retire. Economic and other factors are in many individual cases inextricably interwoven in the situation within which the choice must be made. The young person may feel that as an individual he would better himself economically if he broke from the farm and entered another occupation. He may, however, be so completely a member of the parental family group that he cannot leave; or he may have such a dread of the city that he simply continues year after year on the farm, taking what he can get in the way of economic reward. Economic pressure gets to the individual by threatening his standard of living. It is perfectly possible for the farm individual's standard of living to be so low that he never feels the push of economic pressure.

The migration to the cities is more largely of women than of men and the average age of female migrants is lower than that of male migrants. Suppose a twin brother and sister graduate together from the town high school at the age of eighteen. It would seem to be quite the expected thing for the son to remain on the farm at least temporarily. Upon the other hand, unless the daughter is already looking ahead rather definitely

toward marriage, it is not so clearly to be expected that she should remain. The differentiating factors are at least three. In the first place, there is likely to be felt upon the part of the parents a greater need for the help of the son than for that of the daughter. His labor at home will increase the family income. This is not so likely to be true of the work of the daughter if she remained at home. In the second place, family caste pressure is much more likely to be used on the son to keep him in the occupation than upon the daughter. If, for sentimental or other reasons, it is the parents' desire that the farm remain in the family, it is naturally the son who is to be made to feel, if possible, that farming should be his life work. The daughter is left more free to locate herself in life. Or if son and daughter should care equally for the home farm and both wished to remain there for life, the son would quite naturally have a prior claim, the daughter being eliminated. Finally, the son may take an entirely different attitude toward marriage from that of the daughter His decision to remain on the farm either temporarily or permanently may be made entirely without regard to his marriage program or prospects. If he becomes a farm operator, he is pretty sure to marry sooner or later, but the matter never needs to become of primary importance to him. The daughter's marriage prospects or her attitude regarding marriage are of fundamental importance as deciding whether or not she remain in the agricultural community. If she thinks she has the opportunity of marrying a farmer's son and wishes to take advantage of the opportunity, she will of course remain. If she sees no such opportunity, or is opposed to becoming a farmer's wife, or thinks she never will care to marry, or is ambitious to accomplish something in an individual way first, postponing all thought of marriage until a later date, she is likely to leave home for the city.

The above considerations furnish at least a partial explanation of the fact that there are more women than men migrants to the cities, and of the other fact that women migrants are younger than the men who go. It has sometimes been conjectured that girls leave for the cities at an earlier age than boys because they mature earlier. While this fact is very likely not without influence, still, if boys and girls were equally mature at any given age, there seem to be good reasons for believing that the girl would be apt to leave for the city ahead of her twin brother.

The social implications of the sex difference in migration as well as of the age differences will be considered in later sections of this chapter.

Characteristics of Farm-city Migrants

It is interesting to know in what respects, if any, those young people who go from farm to city differ in general from those others of the same age who do not go. What reasons within a young man's nature impel him to sever his connections with the parental home and occupation,

while another, similarly situated to all outward appearances, gives no indication of feeling a like urge? It is reasonable to suppose that he is somewhat akin by nature to the young men of the past who left their homes and joined the migration *toward* the farms during all of the period of America's agricultural expansion.

The first farmers in this country were a vigorous, sturdy group of nonconformists who broke from unsatisfactory conditions in their old homes and plunged courageously into the American wilderness. Every wave of migration westward was characterized by an atmosphere of individualism. Those restless spirits dissatisfied in the East turned westward. Boys who ran away from home ran in the direction of the setting sun. The farm pioneers were an energetic, determined people who turned their backs upon what would be for most people the paths of least resistance and deliberately went where life was hard.

There is no evidence that, in general, these westward-moving ancestors of our present-day farmers cared greatly for agriculture as such. Their selection was not in the main a truly occupational one. Their motives for going must have been many and mixed. There was the chance to own a home. There was the possibility of profiting through real estate speculation. There was the chance to get away from meddlesome relatives. There was the opportunity for a man to become a petty sovereign in a little kingdom of his own, ruling over at least wife and children with as iron-like a hand as he felt inclined to use. There was the challenge of relatively untamed nature, defying men of energy to heartening combat with ax and plow. Actuated by these and possibly other motives, including mere planless adventure, these men of an earlier America became farmers, and their descendants are largely on the farms of America today.

The pioneer of a romantic past has vanished. The forests have been felled, the prairies have been broken up, houses and roads have been built. Over these roads, at a more or less terrifying rate of speed travel mainly the urban public, on its way from city to city; and as it travels it may see the farmer plodding at his work, and it may see with him in the field his children and not infrequently his wife. The descendants of the men who fled westward from the conformities of a custom-bound East are trudging in as nicely laid out pathways of social convention as one could ask to see. No longer any West to flee to, the more restless children of this generation take themselves off to the cities.

Those are most likely to remain on the farms who take most readily the stamp of the family-farm mold. There is no evidence whatever that those who go care less for nature and country life than do those who remain. Neither is there much reason for believing that the urban migrants are not inherently as well fitted to take pleasure in agricultural processes as are those who do not go. There is good reason, however,

for holding that non-agricultural pursuits select those individuals who react most vigorously against the family-farm way of living. To put this the other way about is to say that those who remain on farms do not thereby indicate any especial love for country life or any particular aptitude for agriculture as such, but they do indicate the possession of plastic natures which are relatively little resistant to the traditional impress of the family-farm institution. They are mainly of the sort who would remain wherever heredity placed them, pliantly fitting the grooves of an established way of life.

It is frequently said that the city draws away the best of the country population. Even as early as 1844, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "The cities drain the country of the best part of the population, the flower of the youth of both sexes goes into the towns, and the country is cultivated by a much inferior class."[1] Emerson may have been mistaken. It is very likely that Professor Ross is more nearly on the right track when he says that "perhaps the trait most distinctive of those who cut their moorings in order to follow the call of distant opportunity is the spirit of initiative."[2] According to this interpretation, those who go are superior to those who remain merely from the standpoint of being able to start something, which after all is but one of many valuable abilities. "A heavy outflow of this element need not leave the community poorer in physique, or brains, or character, but it does leave it poorer in natural leaders."[3]

It may be that those who go are not so much characterized by the spirit of initiative in the sense of the ability to lead others as they are by a restless nature which will not permit them to abide contentedly in the highly restricted life traditional on the farms. The same urge which carried the ancestors to the Western farms carries the more restless descendants off from those same farms. Some of those who go are well fitted by nature to be leaders, many are well equipped with native ability to achieve a high degree of individual success in some chosen field, many others have neither the ability that makes for leadership, nor for more than a mediocre grade of personal achievement, but are simply restless, unwilling to be tied to the settled routine characteristic of a typically agricultural existence.

Warren H. Wilson says of those going from the country to the city,

> Every type of mind that is highly specialized, every industrial character, every mechanical gift that is highly rewarded, every business faculty that inclines its possessor to acquire and use capital goes to the city. Into the city

[1] Bryce, James B., *The American Commonwealth*, Chap. CXVI, The Macmillan Company, 1888.

[2] Ross, E. A., "Folk Depletion as a Cause of Rural Decline," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, pp. 21–30, Vol. XI, 1916.

[3] *Ibid.*

are thus brought the mechanical, the executive, the acquisitive, the musical, the literary, the humorous.[1]

Quite obviously, according to Dr. Wilson, the population of a rural district that has been for some time undergoing this selective process becomes of "a somewhat uniform type of mind" of a rather inferior order. It surely is the case, however, that specialized type of mind alone is incapable of carrying its possessor away from his inherited home and occupation. Unless such a nature be accompanied by a restless urge capable of developing itself to the point, if necessary, of vigorous resistance against the forces of conformity, it is altogether likely to be held by the parental institution. It is the writer's contention that young men and women of the very finest natures, sensitive, oftentimes artistic in their fiber, are more apt to yield themselves to traditional demands than are others, unless they chance to be thrown into contact with appreciative individuals from the outside world who can inspire them to a self-reliant struggle up the hard path of achievement towards the specialized goals which they are by nature well fitted to reach. Mediocre farmers are not at all rare who impress the sympathetic observer with certain qualities of mind which seem inherently to fit their possessors for successful achievement in other fields. There are potential musicians and poets, philosophers and scientists, lawyers and engineers, scattered all through our agricultural population. These men and women may be only vaguely, if at all, conscious of the part they might have played in the specialized life of modern civilization. They have simply taken life unquestioningly in the way that it was handed on to them by their parents.

The young women of the agricultural community are subjected to a process of selection that has features of its own. In the typical community there is a shortage of women of marriage age, owing to the facts that the migration of women to the cities is greater than that of men and that they go at a younger age than men migrants. The natural result of this situation is a very thorough sorting over (on the part of the farmers' sons who are thinking of marriage) of those girls who are in the community. No farm girl is likely to be overlooked in the process of mate selection as are so many young women in the typical urban community. Every one of them is reasonably certain to be subjected to the appraising scrutiny of the marrying young farmers, their parents, and other relatives. Those who are at all sexually attractive and possess such other qualities as parents may consider essential are likely to find themselves becoming the wives of farmers before they arrive at the point of anything like a rational consideration of life's possibilities. In other words, the family-farm institution reaches them on the sex basis quite

[1] Wilson, Warren H., "Country versus City," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, Vol. XI, pp. 12–20, 1916.

frequently at an extremely early age. Unless they are by nature, or because of environmental influences, relatively resistant to the institution's appeal on that basis, the forces of life have selected them to become farm wives and mothers. This is not to be taken to mean that many farm-born girls do not choose to become the wives of farmers on as rational a plane of choice as that upon which any marriage decision is made. It simply means that the more susceptible never get to the stage of rational choice either for or against a marriage within the agricultural community and that the migrants from the farms are, more largely than those who remain, of the sexually less attractive and the sexually less susceptible.

A Washington Study of Migration.—A. A. Smick and F. R. Yoder during the summer of 1928 conducted a study in the state of Washington "to determine the extent of farm migration from the three communities studied, what the reasons are for the migration of farm folks to the city, and whether the migration has been selective in its effects upon the rural population."[1]

The three communities studied were located in as many counties of the state. Altogether 552 families were visited. Information was received regarding 1,996 persons sixteen years of age or over who either were still living on the farms or had left the farm for town life. Of the 1,031 males in regard to whom information was received, 165, or 16 per cent, had left the farm. Of the 965 females, 213, or 22 per cent, had gone. Thus, as is generally the case in agricultural communities, there were more males than females in the community studied, and a larger proportion of females than of males had left these communities for life elsewhere.

Those who left the farms and those who remained upon them are shown to differ on the average from each other. The differences that were discovered may be assumed to be in part those of innate nature and in part a matter of opportunities provided through the home and community. It is never possible to separate in any clear-cut way the workings of heredity and environment in an individual case. This fact may be well illustrated in the material afforded by the study.

A larger share of the men and boys who left the farms were paid wages by their parents before they were twenty-one than was the case of those who remained. A larger proportion of those who remained were allowed a share in the crops or stock before they were twenty-one; also a larger proportion of them were allowed to help plan the enterprise. There probably is no general answer to the question why one boy is paid wages while another is given a share in the amount produced. The

[1] Smick, A. A., and F. R. Yoder, "A Study of Farm Migration in Selected Communities in the State of Washington," *Bulletin* 233, State College of Washington, Agricultural Experiment Station, June, 1929.

significance of the difference, however, should be plain. The boy who is allowed to help plan the work and is given a share in the returns is in these ways encouraged to identify himself with the enterprise and to think of himself as a significant member of the family labor force. The individuality of the one who is paid wages is thereby stressed. He is in this way encouraged to think of himself as an individual, and it would be expected that he would be more likely than the other young man to leave for the city where wages are higher and individuality gets a more complete chance for expression than is usually possible in the family-unit system. It may be as the authors suggest, that where wages are paid to boys under twenty-one, it is usually because the latter have already shown individualistic inclinations, and the payment of wages is the only way in which they may be kept for a time from leaving for the city.

More of the boys who remained on the farms were given one or more vacations a year than was true of those who left; also a larger share of those who remained had Saturday afternoons free. These are possibly the most surprising findings produced in the study. It may, of course, be argued that free time for the boy, whether in the form of Saturday afternoons off or of more extended vacations, would tend to make him more contented than he might otherwise be with farm life. Upon the other hand, it may as plausibly be argued that free time affords an opportunity for competing suggestions to get in their work of developing discontent. This latter result, contrary to fact, would seem to be more in harmony with the rest of the findings brought out in the study.

A larger share of those who went to the towns and cities came from homes well supplied with modern conveniences and facilities for recreation and amusement. The houses they came from were more generally equipped with running water, bathtubs, modern lights, telephones, and musical instruments, and with all kinds of reading material except novels, which were found in greater numbers in the homes of those who remained. More of those who went came from families possessing automobiles. The differences in regard to certain of the items are truly striking. For example, while only about 49 per cent of those remaining, when between the ages of ten and twenty, were in homes equipped with telephones, about 72 per cent of those who went came from such homes.

In so far as the familiarity with modern conveniences in the home becomes a factor inducing or aiding farm young people to leave for the city, it may be of influence through making them feel more at home in the urban environment where such conveniences are in general use. It is quite possible, however, that the possession and use of these things in the childhood home are of themselves of no great significance as an influence in the direction of migration. They may merely accompany certain other more decisive factors.

Those who left for the city had done more reading in the home than had those who remained. This was true even in the case of novels. More of the men who remained had during the age period of ten to twenty read agriculture books than was true of those who went. The percentage reading "other books" was also a little higher in the case of those who remained. In every other category, however—local weekly papers, daily papers, boys' and girls' magazines, farm papers, general magazines, agricultural bulletins, religious books, and novels—those who went had in larger proportions read them during their 'teen years than had those who remained. The relation between reading and migration may be viewed from two different angles. Reading may be thought of as an expression of the same venturesome spirit that characterizes migration. It may also be thought of as a source of suggestions that might lead to migration. It is both of these.

Those who left for the city were, while still on the farm, more frequent attendants at the motion pictures, at dances, and at socials. They also attended church, Sunday School, and young people's religious meetings more generally and more regularly. A somewhat larger proportion of those remaining on farms were *members* of the church than of those who left. Church membership may be thought of as implying something of the same sort of identification of the self with the community that receiving the share of the proceeds of the farm involves in the way of identification of the self with the family economic enterprise. Likewise, attendance upon church and other community gatherings, without membership, may be likened possibly to receiving wages for work done on the home farm. The attendance at all sorts of social meetings in the community, just as the reading of magazines and books, provides a broader social contact for the individual than that provided by the family and the immediate neighbors. It is not in the least surprising that those who migrated came more largely from among those who read and were active in a social way rather than from those whose interests were devoted more exclusively to the family and farm.

As would be expected, those who left the farms had more years of school attendance to their credit, on the average, than those who remained. Of those who remained on the farm, only about 48 per cent had attended high school at all, and they had attended for an average of 2.7 years each. Over 61 per cent of those who left the farms had attended high school, and for an average of 3.2 years each. A higher proportion of those leaving had attended college and for a greater average length of time than was the case of those remaining.

A reason for thinking that the better-educated migrants to the cities have no greater inherent capacity than the less well-educated individuals who remain on the farms is brought out in a table showing the average grades of those who took the eighth-grade state examination. Records

were found for 104 persons who left the farms and for 213 who remained. The average grades of those leaving was 84.13, while those who remained averaged 85.58 or 1.45 points higher. The authors' comment on this is as follows:

> This evidence shows that the boys and girls of these three counties who enter high school and college and train themselves for some other profession and then, having the opportunity, leave the farm, are not necessarily the brightest group on the whole. If those who remain on the farm had gone to high school and college they would doubtless have made just as good a record as those who attended these institutions.[1]

It is unsafe on the basis of the findings to conclude that either those who left or those who remained were superior in capacity to the other group. Comparatively few of those who remained on the farm took the eighth-grade examination above referred to, in fact, only 213 out of 1,618, or 13 per cent. Upon the other hand, 104 of the 378 who left, or 27 per cent, had taken the examination. It seems a fair assumption that a larger proportion of those who remained than of those who left failed to take the examination because they had dropped out of school before completing the eight elementary grades. Some of those who dropped out undoubtedly did so because of inferior native ability. It may also be that the slightly higher average grade made in examination by those who remained is to be accounted for not so much, if at all, by the superior ability of that group as through the fact that members of this group had less in the way of competing mental stimuli than the others. Those who left did more general reading than those who remained and were more busily engaged with social diversions than the latter, which may account for a failure on their part to apply themselves so whole-heartedly to preparation for the final examinations in the elementary school. Professor Robert C. Angell concluded on the basis of a study of the undergraduate students in the University of Michigan that oftentimes high grades are earned because the student has for one reason or another failed to become personally adjusted in any other activity than scholarship. It seems plain that the same principle may be at work all the way down the educational ladder.[2]

The 378 individuals who left these three Washington communities seem to have been a select group socially, whatever may be concluded regarding their relative inherent ability. They came from the best homes in their communities, as judged by the presence in them of modern conveniences and amusements and a relatively large supply of reading material. One bit of evidence to substantiate the idea that the homes they came from were really good homes is the fact that those who left

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] ANGELL, ROBERT C., *A Study in Undergraduate Adjustment*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1930.

made use of the reading material available. If the more prosperous farmers have the better-equipped homes and if the more capable individuals are the more prosperous, then it seems to follow naturally that those who left inherited greater average ability than those who remained, notwithstanding the fact that their record in elementary-school examinations was relatively somewhat inferior.

Summing up the matter, one is driven to the conclusion that the three communities would have been better off in a social way if the 378 had remained, and a like number of typical individuals of the other group had left in their stead. Those coming from the best homes are the ones most likely in turn to provide good homes for themselves and their families. Those most active in their communities are likely to stimulate their children to a relatively high degree of such activity. Those with the most years in school and college are likely to encourage those who come after them to spend a considerable period in the educative process. Whatever sort of combination of influences, hereditary and environmental, made these 378 what they became, the going of this group must be viewed as a loss to their communities. An equal number of others might much more readily have been spared. The migration rate, however, from these communities was so low that it could not be said to result in impoverishment of population values. In the words of the authors.

> It would seem that the farming communities can contribute a fairly large number of persons of superior ability to the cities and still have enough persons of similar talents to maintain a progressive and virile community life in the country.[1]

If 50 per cent of those born in the farming community were to leave for the cities, as some writers hold to be a future probability, instead of about 19 per cent, as in the case of these three communities in Washington and if the principles of selection found to operate in these communities were to operate generally, the loss sustained might be extremely serious.

Reasons for Migration from the Three Washington Communities.— There is good reason to believe that there is little significance to be attached to the answers that individuals make when asked why they left the farm. In the very nature of the case any one factor in a very complex situation should not be expected to overshadow all of the others in the mind of a person who is leaving his farm home for the city. In some cases, without doubt, one factor does nearly completely dictate the decision. In others the matter is not nearly so clear-cut. Even where the situation is fairly simple, any one of two or more possible answers might seem to fit the case as well as any of the others. An individual who says that he left the farm because he disliked farming might possibly with equal truth have said that he went because he could make more money in the city, or because other interests than farming

[1] See footnote on p. 164.

were more appealing to him, or because he lacked what he considered to be sufficient capital with which to begin farming, or because there was a better social opportunity in the city, or because the girl he was in love with would not marry him unless he went to the city. Careful case studies would bring to light enough of the maze of interacting forces so that the student making the study might possibly understand the situation better than the one who was being studied. Upon the other hand, statistical tables based upon answers given in a questionnaire tell us almost nothing.

The lack of reliability of answers made to the question regarding the reason for migration is well brought out in the study of Washington communities. More than a third of all the male migrants questioned gave answers differing from those previously given concerning them by their relatives still living on farms. Very likely the migrant and his relatives were usually in general agreement as to his reason for leaving, but the appearance of statistical tabulations is altered by a changed phrasing of the answer. The boy's father may have said that the young man left home because he disliked farming, while the boy himself may have replied that he went because he could make more money in the city. In such a case, father and boy might have meant precisely the same thing. The reasons given by relatives for males leaving the farm were, in the order of their importance, as follows: disliked farming; could make more money in the city; lack of land; other interests than farming more appealing; lack of capital; poor health. All of these reasons might be grouped together into one statement which all of those who went could have subscribed to. It might have read something like this: "Under the circumstances in which I found myself, I preferred to go to the city rather than to continue on the farm." It goes without saying that no two of these migrants were surrounded by precisely the same set of circumstances. Therefore, any cataloguing into groups is bound to be well-nigh meaningless.

Seventy per cent of the women who had left the farm were married, all with one main reason for leaving: marriage to someone other than a farmer. In other words, apparently the occupation of the man each woman married was the most decisive factor in determining whether she would live on the farm or in town. Case studies, if all of the relevant facts were thus made available, would tell why this group of farm-born women married men of urban occupations instead of farmers. A reading of these individual case studies would then reveal the underlying reasons for migration, which would, of course, be individual reasons. These women who have left the farm and married in town could be divided in a loose sort of way into about four groups, as follows: those who liked farm life but failed of an opportunity to marry farmers (probably a very small group); those who would have married certain farmers had the opportunities presented themselves, but who married in town in pref-

erence to the sort of farm marriages that were open to them; those who would have gone unmarried rather than to marry farmers; those to whom the issue *farm versus city* never presented itself but who merely thought in terms of potential husbands and selected men who were not farmers. Those marrying in town in these Washington communities seem to have been a somewhat select group. It would be interesting to know which was in general the more repellent factor to them in farm life, the farm itself or the sort of men on the farm who were available as husbands; or, to put it the other way about, were they attracted to town and city life as such or were they attracted more to the men of the city who proffered marriage? In certain cases, the women themselves would be unable to answer the question. The farm and the farmer are likely to be so completely integrated that they are seen as a unit, together attractive or repellent.

In the case of a minority of female migrants, marriage apparently was not the chief consideration involved in the movement to town. Other factors listed in the order of their importance are the following: could make more money in the city; other interests than farming more appealing; poor health; lacked capital to begin farming; disliked farming; better social opportunity in the city; lacked land with which to begin farming. While a dislike for farming was mentioned more frequently than any other factor as the reason for male migration, it occupies a much less important place among the reasons given for the migration of females. It would be entirely unsafe, however, to conclude that the women migrants had any less dislike for the farm than had the men.

The largest number of male migrants to the cities became common laborers; the next largest in the following order became professional men, mechanics, clerks, and merchants.

A Minnesota Study of Migration.—Carle C. Zimmerman conducted a study during the years 1925 and 1926 of migration from Minnesota farm homes.[1] Data were secured from 694 farm families so selected as to be representative of the entire farming population of the state. Of this number, 494 of the families gave information as to their cash receipts. The primary object of the study was to ascertain the differences existing among several income groups as regards migration. The data

> . . . were analyzed to find if towns or cities selected a larger proportion of children from any one economic class than from another; if the large cities selected similar proportions of each class; if the children from each group rose at a similar rate of speed to the non-wage earning classes; and, finally, if selection affected both sexes alike.

Professor Zimmerman found in answer to his four questions that (1) the migration to the towns and cities was greatest from the less

[1] Zimmerman, Carle C., "The Migration to Towns and Cities," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 105–109, July, 1927.

successful, and supposedly less competent, of farm families. (2) The large cities were more instrumental than were small towns and villages in causing nonproportional selection. (3) The children of the more successful farm families who did migrate rose more rapidly to the non-wage earning classes than did the others. (4) More daughters than sons left the farms for town and city life, the largest group of migrants being daughters of the less successful farm families.

Comparison of Washington and Minnesota Studies.—The data secured in the two studies are not strictly comparable; thus comparison must be largely a matter of conjecture. Zimmerman found that 33 per cent of the children eighteen years of age or older of the families investigated had left the farms for urban life. It was revealed in the Washington study that 19 per cent of those sixteen years of age or older had gone. It may be that, after making due allowance for the two years' difference in minimum age of migrants who are considered, migration is a somewhat larger factor in Minnesota farm life than in that of Washington. If this be the case, it may be due to a closer proximity of large city centers to the farmers of Minnesota than to those of Washington.

Nothing conclusive may be said about the inherited ability of the migrants in either case. The Washington young people who went from farms to cities were drawn more largely from the better farm homes, and they were a somewhat select group from the point of view of the possession of active social natures. The Minnesota migrants, upon the other hand, came more largely from the least prosperous farm families, and very likely from homes less well equipped than the average with modern conveniences and less well supplied with reading material and with other facilities for recreation and amusement. It would seem to be a safe conjecture that the Washington migrants were on the average of a relatively finer type of personality than was the case of those in Minnesota, and it may be that they were also of a relatively greater average natural capacity than the latter. Such a difference would not be unexpected in view of the fact that the large-city influence must be greater for Minnesota farm families than for the farm families of Washington. Zimmerman has shown that it is the large cities that draw the disproportionate number from the lower-income farm families.

In both studies it was found that the largest number of male migrants became common laborers and the second largest number became professional men, with smaller numbers in each case entering urban middle-class occupations. It was found in the case of the Minnesota migrants that those from the more prosperous farm families were more likely than the others to get into the professions and other salaried occupations. The Washington data do not cover this point, but there is little question that it is generally true that those from the higher-income

farm families are able to locate themselves more advantageously in the cities than are those from the financially less able families.

Zimmerman concludes on the basis of the occupational distribution in the cities of farm migrants, together with the occupational distribution in the cities of those who later go to the farms, that "the cities attract the extremes and the farms attract the mean strata in society."[1] By this statement it is meant

> . . . that the average types of persons tend to stay in agriculture, whereas, on the whole, the extremely competent and the extremely incompetent tend to go more to cities. In other words, it is a theory that the urban "pied-piper" is drawing away the children from the lower and upper ranks of natural ability.[1]

This theory may be attacked on the ground that it tends to oversimplify the actual situation. It seems to give altogether too much credit to the influence of heredity, or natural ability, in placing the individual in his occupational niche. It may be assumed that members of urban professional classes have the highest average mental capacity of any population group and that the members of the unskilled labor have the lowest. It has been shown from various studies that farmers' sons tend to enter these two extreme social groups more generally than the occupational groups of the urban middle class. It may be, however, that farmers' sons of hereditary ability not far removed from average are being drawn into these two extreme social groups at fully as high a rate as are the extremely competent and the extremely incompetent. It is obvious that some individuals have too poor a natural ability under the most favorable environmental conditions to gain admittance to urban professional life. It should also be easy to believe that individuals of very fine native ability may spend their lives in the lower ranks of urban labor through environmental failure to secure any other sort of occupational adjustment. It may be the case that the urban middle-class occupations are in general the most difficult of all for the farm-born young person of average hereditary ability to enter.

The case of a farmer's son nineteen years old, of fairly good native ability, may be considered. He has made up his mind that he wishes to leave the farm for the city. If he has graduated from high school with a creditable record, he may prepare himself to become a professional man. Freedom from too great a financial handicap, good health, and the willingness to apply himself strenuously for some years to the prescribed course of training will quite surely gain his admittance to a professional career. Intellectual brilliance is not essential, and many fairly successful men in every profession do not give the impression of having been endowed with more than ordinary native ability.

[1] Sorokin, Pitrim, and C. C. Zimmerman, *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, p. 574, Henry Holt & Company, New York, 1929.

If this nineteen-year-old farm boy of fairly good ability who wishes to go to the city has had a somewhat different start in life from that suggested, a professional career may be out of the question for him. If he has had poor educational facilities or if he has been kept out of school a great deal to work on the farm, he will be lacking the proper educational foundation for college work. If he can get no financial help from home, the difficulties in the way of a long college and professional course may seem to him to be insuperable, even if he has achieved a good secondary school foundation. He may not care to study, or he may be anxious to begin drawing a pay check, or he may wish not to postpone marriage for several years until he should be established in a profession. In short, any one of several environmental factors may be sufficient to prevent this young man of good heredity from preparing for entrance to the professional group. Some unskilled labor job is, in general, ready for him. He may take such a job and begin to pay his expenses at once in the city. It is likely to be the only urban opening for him, and he wishes to live in the city. Middle-class places are not readily available to those who have lacked training courses, business experience, influential urban friends, or capital. Most farm-born migrants lack all of these; thus they begin their urban life on one of the lowest rungs of the social and industrial ladder, through no fault of their heredity. It is readily conceivable that some apparently minor environmental circumstance may determine whether the farm-city migrant begins his urban life as a member of the professional or the hand-labor group. Opportunities for promotion are so few that the chances are very much in favor of those who begin as manual laborers spending their entire lives in that group. The environmental complexities of the individual case must be fully as important factors in determining the farm-city migrant's urban status as is his natural ability. This being true, one cannot assume that the city selects especially from the two hereditary groups of the unusually gifted and the unusually handicapped.

It is not surprising that migrants from the more prosperous farm families are more likely than others to enter the urban professional group. This may be due fully as much, however, to the prosperity of their parents as to their inheritance of superior germ plasm. They are more likely than other migrants to have had a favorable home life, good school advantages, and financial aid from the parents to make possible the expensive courses of professional training.

The Migration of Farm Families to the City

One of the most complete studies of the migration of families away from the farm has been made by Dr. C. J. Galpin.[1] His study was based

[1] Galpin, C. J., "Analysis of Population Movements to and from Farms," U. S. Department of Agriculture, October, 1927.

upon data furnished by 2,745 former farm operators who had become residents of villages, towns, and cities. Every state in the Union was represented by this group of migrants. Among the more interesting conclusions apparently justified by the study are the following:

1. Migrating farm families are a somewhat select group from the economic standpoint. Of the former operators represented in this study 84 per cent had been owners, while in 1925 less than 62 per cent of the nation's farms were operated by owners. Also, most of these men had operated "moderately large farms."

2. Migrating farm families are a somewhat select group from the educational standpoint. Two-thirds of the operators included in the study had at least finished the eighth grade. The proportion of the entire farming population who have secured that much formal education is much lower than two-thirds.

3. Those farm operators who leave their farms for urban life are not in the main old men who have lived out their years of activity in agriculture and have reared their children and seen them established in life. They are young enough on the average to have at least one child with them in the urban home. One of the chief reasons, in fact, for their moving to town was that their children might be afforded better educational opportunities than the farm community could provide.

4. The chief reason for migration in the cases of at least one-third of those who go is that they have been unable "to make ends meet" on the farm. Those who would give this as their main reason for moving to town are not necessarily among the less prosperous farmers. They are those who think that they may be able to maintain themselves and families on a higher standard of living elsewhere than is possible for them to achieve in agriculture.

There is the possibility that the 2,745 former farm operators who furnished data for Dr. Galpin's study do not represent at all accurately the whole number of heads of families who migrate. It may be that the more prosperous and better-educated migrants are more likely than the others to furnish the desired information. It is easy to believe, however, that, *other things being equal*, the man with the fairly large farm to rent or sell is more likely to go than another not so fortunately situated. He may possibly establish his son or son-in-law on the farm. (According to this study, "about one-third of the farms of those who still own their farms are operated by tenants who are related.") In any case, he may derive a considerable part of his income from the sale or rental of his farm, while at the same time working at another occupation in town. (According to this study, "one-third of those who still own farms after moving received over half their present income from farms.") The farmer, upon the other hand, with a small or low-income farm may feel himself unable to go to the city with the attendant risk of uncertain

employment. He is able "to make ends meet" at a low standard of living where he is. His children leave for city industrial employment more largely than is the case with more prosperous farmers, as was shown to be the case in the Minnesota study of migration above referred to—in part, undoubtedly, because the parents are unable to aid them in establishing themselves in agriculture.

Migration from Cities to the Farm

While the migration toward the farms is enough smaller than the migration away from the farms to leave a net migration cityward of more than half a million a year, yet the farmward migration is considerable. During the six years from January 1, 1924 to January 1, 1930 it averaged more than 100,000 a month.

A certain part of this so-called "movement to the farms" is made up of urban laborers who, while continuing to work in the cities, have merely moved out on to plots of land in the country in order to combine the advantages of country living with city income. They pay less for rent and more for transportation than when they lived in town. With the help of wives and children they may produce part of the family living from the land. Possibly they have secured an improvement in living conditions for their growing children. The good roads and the automobile have made possible this combination of country life and urban occupation for greatly increased numbers of people. In many cases, it does not involve migration, for farm residents, while still living in their farm homes, secure their employment in the cities. In other cases, it does mean the movement of city people to country homes, without change of occupation on their part.

A good many others of the city-farm migrants are young people, farm born, who have merely been spending some years in the city, marking time, as it were, until the expected opportunity came for them to return to the old home community, possibly to the home farm. Upon the death or retirement of the father, the son may go back to carry on the operation of the farm. Many a farm-born young woman spends some time in town preceding her marriage to a young farmer in the home community. While their going to town has been for but a short period of years and was never intended to be a permanent removal, these young people are migrants, just the same, first to the city, then, back to the farm.

Another considerable group of migrants are young people, mainly women, who are marrying into agriculture. On the basis of his Minnesota study, Professor Zimmerman concludes that "four out of five who enter the agricultural from other classes did so by marrying into it."[1] There is

[1] Sorokin, Pitrim, and C. C. Zimmerman, *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, p. 572, Henry Holt & Company, New York, 1929.

a continued shortage in typical farm communities of young women of marriage age. Some brides must come from the towns to meet the demand for farm wives. Then, too, the increased physical interpenetration of rural and urban must increase the likelihood that the farmer's son will find himself a wife in town, however great may be the supply of potential farm wives in his home neighborhood. Also young men from the towns enter agriculture through marriage to farmers' daughters. Owing to the facts, however, that the farm community is better supplied with young men than with young women and that the farm is more likely to be passed down to a son than to a daughter, the migration through marriage is for the most part a migration of women.

The great body of the city-farm migration is made up of families that have previously moved to town from the country and have decided to return to their earlier occupation. Of 10,000 men, migrants from city to farm who furnished Dr. Galpin with the information, 8,700 had been born on farms, and 7,700 had been farm operators.

According to Dr. Galpin's statement, the following are the reasons given by the 8,700 for returning to the farm:

> One thousand six hundred of them said, "We can make more money and save more on the farm than in the city on account of family living's being so high in the city . . .
>
> One thousand four hundred said, "City work is too hard and too uncertain . . .
>
> One thousand said, "We like the farm because we are independent there . . .
>
> Two thousand said, "We are tired of city work and city life. In fact, we have come to dislike the city and long for the farm . . .
>
> Two thousand seven hundred said, "We have found that the city is no place to bring up children in, and we have gone back to the farm for the health of the family and better all-around living conditions.[1]

In considering these 8,700 cases of city-farm migrants, heads of families who were farm-born and are now returning to the farm, the student will realize certain facts of which the migrants themselves may or may not be conscious. In the first place, he will realize that every such case is a case of personal maladjustment to urban life. The large proportion of urban dwellers are living happy and successful lives. Upon the other hand, many are neither happy nor successful. Some of the latter came from farms, and in their disappointment over their personal situation in the city they are returning to the farms in quest of that happiness and success which they have failed to achieve in urban life.

Some of these men are by nature of a sort who can never achieve a reasonably good quality of contentment. In the first place, they disliked the farm and went to the city. Now they dislike the city and are returning to the farm. There is no assurance that in their second experience

[1] GALPIN, C. J., "Gentlemen Preferring Farms," *Rural America*, October, 1929.

with the farm they will find the situation sufficiently to their liking to keep them from migrating a second time out of agriculture. There are many people in this world who are by nature restless and discontented with whatever may be their existing lot. Some of these people help to swell the migration streams flowing in both directions between farm and town.

Then there is the undoubted fact that urban adjustment for the farm-reared person is likely to be a difficult process whatever may be his inherent nature. Eighteen or twenty or more years of life lived under the conditions of family-farm solidarity is not the best sort of preparation, generally speaking, for efficient participation in the highly competitive individualized life of the cities. The schools and other rural community agencies have until now done altogether too little in the way of preparing farm-born young people for an easy and efficient adjustment to the urban conditions under which so many of them must live. In spite, however, of whatever difficulties they must encounter, great numbers of people from the farms are each year establishing themselves in city life so successfully and so happily that they would never seriously consider a return to the occupation of agriculture. The 8,700 are typical of a fairly large group who are failing in their attempts to make this successful adjustment.

Both adjustment and maladjustment are individual in their nature. A collection of a great number of case histories of both adjusted and maladjusted farm-born people living in cities should be most instructive. A grouping of individuals under a very few headings, as in the case of the 8,700, while of great value, leaves the thoughtful student in a questioning mood.

The student is interested in the 1,600 heads of families who said that they could save more money on the farm than in the city because the cost of family living is so high in the city. He wonders just how many of these men will realize that whatever financial gain they do achieve by returning to the farm comes from the productive labor of wives and young children. Assuming that these men do find themselves to be *financially* advantaged through the return to the farm, he wonders just what proportion of the women and children involved are likely to derive *personal* advantage through the change.

Of the 1,400 who think of themselves as leaving the hard and uncertain work of the city for the easier and more certain work of the farm, the student would like to know more. In how many cases is the work unreasonably hard in itself, and in how many is it merely relatively hard for the farm-reared man in that it is more exacting than the occupation he had earlier experienced? One would like to know, too, how many wives will be obliged to work longer hours and at heavier tasks and under conditions of greater social isolation than were theirs in town.

Of the 1,000 who said that they preferred farm life because of its independence, one would like to know what proportion of them are personally qualified to use their independence to the best economic and social advantage of their own families and of the larger society.

Of the 2,000 who said that they had come to dislike the city and to long for the farm, one wonders just what personal experiences have brought the changed point of view, and just what proportion of these men are likely in turn to dislike the farm and long for the city.

Two thousand seven hundred discovered that "the city is no place to bring up children in" and returned to the farm in order to give their children a better chance at life and to give the whole family improved health and "better all-around living conditions." It is quite possible that a good proportion of this number by going back to the farm will obtain for themselves and families the health and other life advantages that they seek. Removal from city to farm, however, is of itself no magic process to produce the results indicated. Sweeping statements to the effect that it is better for the child to live in the country than the city, or that family living conditions are more healthful and more wholesome in other ways in the country than in the city, are entirely unjustified. "City" and "farm" as terms are far too indefinite to be set over against one another in any meaningful way when one is discussing child care or family health. Some farm children are certainly much better situated than most city children; and it is just as true that some city children are much better cared for than most farm children. It would seem that to give one's children a better chance for wholesome development is as good a reason for migration either to or away from the city as there can be. It would be interesting to know, however, just what each of the 2,700 fathers considers to be the ideal goal in child development and just how each of the 2,700 families was situated in the city, and later on the farm, from the standpoint of the likelihood of the realization of that ideal goal. It is to be surmised that in a certain number of cases no very definite child-rearing program was present in the migrating parents' minds. Such a statement as "farm life is best for children" has a way of becoming stereotyped, thus being rendered usable without its validity being tested in specific situations and this whole matter of farm life *versus* city life is essentially a matter of specific situations.

Summary of Conclusions Regarding the Selective Influence of Migration

1. The city draws from the farms a disproportionate number of those who are just of the age to attempt to establish themselves occupationally. This gives the cities disproportionately great numbers in

the more active years of life, conversely leaving the farming districts with reduced numbers of the mid-age group.

2. The city attracts more women than men from the farms and takes them at a somewhat earlier average age than the male migrants. This fact contributes to the presence in the cities of an excess number of native-born women, as contrasted with an excess number of men on the farms.

3. As the chief social difference between farm life and urban life consists in the fact that the former is typically of the family-unit sort while the latter is more completely centered in the individual, this difference must be of considerable influence in determining which individuals will migrate. *Other factors being approximately the same,* it is to be expected that those young individuals will most probably go to the cities who are by nature most impatient of the sort of control that they have experienced in the family-farm system of life.

4. *Other factors being approximately the same,* it is to be expected that those will be most likely to go to the cities who are the better acquainted with life in the cities and in the world in general, whether such broad acquaintance be brought about through actual contact with the life of other classes than the agricultural, or through formal education, or through considerable general reading.

5. *Other factors being approximately the same,* it is to be expected that those whose parents are financially unable to aid their children to establish themselves in agriculture will be most likely to join the migration stream towards the cities.

6. There seems to be no good reason for believing that the migration to the cities is in general either raising or lowering the level of hereditary capability of farming people.

7. The migration from the cities to the farms at the present time is made up almost entirely of those who originally came from the farms and have failed to make for themselves a satisfactory adjustment to urban conditions. The failure of these people to adjust themselves satisfactorily to urban life may be as fully the fault of the specific situations in which they find themselves as of their innate natures.

Rural-urban Age Distribution and Its Social Consequences

A large foreign immigration, such as America has experienced during most of her history as a separate nation, is bound to make in many ways for abnormal, therefore undesirable, social conditions. For one thing the comparative age distribution of country and city is adversely affected. The immigrants who are in overwhelming proportions males of, or nearing the age of, maturity go mainly to the cities. This is one factor making for a relative excess in the cities in the middle-age group and a corresponding deficiency in the early-age group. The migration from the farms to the cities, while not so predominantly of a single sex, contributes to

the same general situation. These farm-city migrants, having spent their childhood in the country, mainly go to the city after the age of fifteen, thus swelling the urban middle-age group.

Professor Gillette vividly presents the situation as revealed by the 1920 census as follows:

> On a basis of one hundred persons each in city and country districts, the country has an excess over the city of about nine persons in the first age group, under fifteen, and has a deficit in the age group fifteen to forty-four of over seven, and in the highest group, of something over one. But when a narrower age-group gradation is followed, it is found that in the age group sixty-five and over, there is a slight excess in the country.[1]

Dr. Galpin, in an equally striking statement aids in picturing the situation when he says, "In a 30,000,000 city group there are 2,000,000 fewer children under ten years of age than in 30,000,000 farm people."[2]

Thus have the farm population of working age apparently a much heavier burden of dependency to carry than have the urban workers. There are many more young children to a given population, as well as more of the aged, those past sixty-five. Traditions of child labor are so strong, however, on the farms that it may be questioned just how much of the apparent burden of child dependency is real. Surely a very large proportion of farm children, by the time they have reached the age of fifteen, have more than paid their way. The relatively high birth rate in agricultural communities is in part due to the fact that farm children are likely not to be an economic burden to their parents. The educational load, however, does rest disproportionately heavily upon rural communities. They have, relatively, many more children to educate and much less wealth with which to meet the expense.

Another very real result of the excessive numbers in the sixty-five-year-and-above age group in rural communities is to be seen in the influence of these older people toward conservatism. The non-progressive influence from this source is not due entirely to the *numbers* in the upper-age group. The nature of rural social organization is such that the average elderly person is more attentively listened to than is the case in the cities. Often the actual leadership in a country community is in the hands of the old, while city leadership quite generally rests with the young and the middle-aged.

To the extent that the farm-city migration is of the more alert and vigorous individuals, their going has obviously taken driving power from the rural districts and added it to the urban.

[1] GILLETTE, JOHN M., *Rural Sociology*, p. 105, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1928.

[2] GALPIN, C. J., "Can the Farm Family Afford Modern Institutions?" *Proceedings*, pp. 39–51, Sixth National Country Life Conference, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1923.

Rural-urban Sex Distribution and Its Social Consequences

For the United States, as a whole, there are 104 males to every 100 females, this discrepancy being at least partly due to the predominantly masculine character of our foreign immigration. In our total urban population, the sexes almost exactly balance, there being in the cities, according to the 1920 census, 100.4 males to every 100 females. In the total rural population, there were 108 males to each 100 females. The disproportion on the farms is still greater, the ratio being 109.1:100. The village populations are in general predominantly feminine.

The numerical equality of the two sexes in the cities might seem to make for a most satisfactory condition until we realize that the foreign-born men greatly out-number the foreign-born women there, while the native-born women in them as greatly outnumber the native-born men. In other words, if the edict should go forth that all urban persons of marriageable age should without delay find themselves urban mates of the opposite sex, a considerable number of native-born women, largely of the middle classes, would find themselves paired off with foreign-born men still more largely of the hand-laboring classes. As no such edict goes forth, many marriageable urban young people remain single simply through their failure to find suitable unattached mates in the circle of their social contacts.

The cities of the different sections of the country differ considerably in the matter of sex distribution. The nearest approach to equality is shown by the cities of the Middle Atlantic states, with 99.7 males to 100 females. A much larger number of girls than of boys must find their way from the farms to these great Eastern cities to offset the number of single male immigrants to be found there. The East South Central cities, almost entirely lacking foreign immigrants, show the lowest proportion of men, the ratio of males to females being 93.8:100. The cities of the Pacific states, which seem to be the natural goal of so many ambitious young men from all over the country, represent the opposite extreme with a ratio of 106.1:100.

The farming districts of every section of the nation are excessively male. The lowest ratio occurs in the South Atlantic states, being 103.6:100; the highest occurring in the Pacific region with 126.6:100; and the most nearly normal for farming communities being in the Middle Atlantic division with 110.6:100.

The disproportionate distribution of sexes in the typical farm community is striking. If a typical farm group numbering 210 people were brought together at some place, there would be in the group 110 men and boys and only 100 women and girls. The men and women who were married or widowed would be practically of equal numbers, and all of the older men and women would have been married, save for a very few

TABLE V.—SEX DISTRIBUTION BY MAJOR DIVISIONS, 1920

Division	Males per 100 females			
	Total population	Farm population	Rural population	Urban population
United States	104.0	109.1	108.0	100.4
New England	98.5	111.7	104.8	96.9
Middle Atlantic	101.4	110.6	106.5	99.7
East North Central	105.7	111.5	108.6	103.9
West North Central	106.1	114.5	110.4	99.5
South Atlantic	101.2	103.6	103.9	95.4
East South Central	101.1	103.8	103.4	93.8
West South Central	105.8	107.9	107.9	101.0
Mountain	115.7	119.5	122.0	105.5
Pacific	113.9	126.6	128.4	106.1

somewhat unusual individuals about equally divided between the two sexes who had stayed on in the community with relatives or old neighbors. There would be, also, about an equal number of boys and girls among the younger children. If the single young people, however, of or near marriageable age should pair off, there would be 10 young men in the group without partners. Some of the 10 would be hired hands who possibly had come into the community from some city. The rest of them would be farmers' sons who were remaining at home, very likely not entirely decided as to their future.

Stating the situation in a different way, there is a shortage of ten young women in this typical group, because help is not so frequently hired for the house as for the fields and because, also, farmers' daughters are more likely to leave for town than are farmers' sons. Apparently there is a lack of a sufficient number of eligible girls in the typical farm community who are willing to become wives of young farmers. Thus some of the latter must obtain their wives elsewhere. Daughters from the hand-laboring classes of the towns are needed to make up the deficiency.

Statistical evidence of comprehensive scope bearing on this point would be valuable. In a study made in 1923, entitled *Causes and Conditions of Retirement of* 100 *Retired Farmers Living in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin,* some interesting information touching this matter may be found.[1] At the time the study was made, 70 sons of these 100 men had become farmers, and 13 more were listed as farm laborers, presumably being on their way towards proprietorship. Only 56 daughters had become farmers' wives. It is shown that at the time the study was made, more daughters than sons had married. Most of those marrying, however, had

[1] U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Causes and Conditions of Retirement of* 100 *Retired Farmers Living in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin,* Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1926.

not married farmers, 62 being listed as housewives, as compared with the 56 farmers' wives. In other words, in this supposedly representative group of farmers, living in what is described as a prosperous dairying region, the daughters were not sharing equally with the sons the responsibility, if such it be, of perpetuating the family occupation.

Just how general is the attitude of a woman student from whose class paper the following bit is quoted? She comes from one of the more substantial farm communities of southern Michigan.

> I am the only child, so the line was broken. Had I been a boy, I might have been there yet, but when my father died, my mother and I sold the farm on contract and moved to the village of ————. I loved the farm and hated to see it go to strangers, but there was nothing else to do. There is no future there for a girl. She cannot manage a farm herself, so the only prospect is marriage with a farmer. Women will not stay on the average farm unless they have to. They have seen enough of that sort of life.

It should be noted that the writer of the above statement is not turning from country life as such nor from the occupation of agriculture. It is rather the family-farm system which is driving her to the city. This is very likely, also, the case with a good proportion of young women migrants from farm to city whose going upsets the sex balance in agricultural communities.

Sex Distribution of Specific Groups

As contrasted with the whites, the negroes of the rural districts are about equally divided between the sexes, there being, in 1920, 101.2 males to 100 females in the country. For some reason, the female sex of the American negroes outnumbers the male to a considerable degree, and the surplus females are in the cities, the ratio of males to females in the urban population being 95.4:100.

While, as has been intimated above, the foreign-born white men in the cities greatly outnumber the women of the same classification, the ratio being 115.9:100, the discrepancy is much greater in the rural districts, the ratio there being 141.8:100. Unmarried women immigrants would naturally turn to the cities for employment. By far the larger proportion of male immigrants go there, too; but there are numerous sorts of opportunities open for them in the country—as farm laborers, lumbermen, and miners.

Marital Conditions

While, as is generally understood, a larger proportion of rural than of urban people are married, the census reports indicate that the difference in this regard obtains almost entirely with the women. At fifteen years of age and over 58.9 per cent of urban and 59.5 per cent of rural males

are married. This is a difference in favor of the country of 0.6 per cent. Or, to put it another way, of 1,000 men in the country, 6 more would be married than would be the case of a like number in the city. If the comparison were between farmers and non-farmers, the difference assuredly would be considerably greater. The figures given merely distinguish rural from urban. As 39 per cent of the rural population are not farmers, it is impossible to tell from the statistics anything very definite regarding the marital status of men on farms. It is a matter of common observation, however, that farm operators are almost without exception married. Farm laborers are to a much larger extent single men.

The proportion of urban women married is almost the same as that of the men. This would be expected to be the case as the numbers of men and women in cities are practically the same. Of urban women 57.6 per cent are married as compared with 58.9 per cent of urban men. The difference of somewhat more than 1 per cent in favor of the men may be almost entirely accounted for by the presence in the cities of a considerable number of married male immigrants who are unaccompanied by their wives.

Of rural women 64.3 per cent are married, a difference of 6.7 per cent in their favor as compared with the urban women, 67 more rural women in each thousand being married than is the case with the women of the cities. Again, this tells nothing definite regarding the situation on the farms. A larger proportion of women than of men are married. There are fewer of hired women helpers than of men, also fewer unmarried daughters remaining on home farms than unmarried sons. Failing to marry at an early age, the girls leave for the city, where they may or may not marry. Many of them deliberately choose the city with the possibility of no marriage at all rather than become farmers' wives.

It is the general impression that the average age at which rural people, and especially those of the farms, marry is lower than is the case with urban people. To the extent that this is true, the differences found to exist in the *numbers* married become less significant. It may be that a larger proportion of country than of city women are found to be married at any given time mainly because country women marry younger. Statistical evidence covering this matter is scanty. W. S. Thompson gives the results of one study made in the state of New York.[1] In this case, the line between rural and urban was drawn at 10,000, and New York City was omitted from consideration. Of the brides in rural areas 27.3 per cent were in the fifteen to nineteen age group when married, as contrasted with 21.5 per cent of the urban brides, with smaller proportions of rural than of urban brides in every other age group. The natural inference is that if the rural-urban line of distinction had been made

[1] Thompson, Warren S., "Rural Demography," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, Vol. XIX, pp. 150–160, 1925.

at any lower point, say at 2,500, the differences would have been found to be still greater.

The great differences which are often said to exist as regards proportions married in rural and urban communities do not seem to be indicated by the statistics. The differences between *farming* and non-farming groups, however, must be very great. The 39 per cent of the rural population who do not live on farms is a sufficiently large part of the total to render rural statistical studies of the marital situation practically meaningless as far as the farms are concerned. The villages contain large numbers of unmarried women, and the rural lumber and mining camps are largely composed of unmarried men. Upon the other hand, the unmarried farm operator is exceedingly rare. Farming people are almost without exception married people, while non-farm people, both urban and rural, to a significantly large extent are single.

Farming people are so largely married because the occupation is a family-unit affair. The unmarried farmer is economically at a great disadvantage. Upon the other hand, non-farm populations are to a much greater extent made up of single people, in part, because the work in which they engage is in general organized upon an individual basis, thus relieving them from the economic necessity of marriage. It might be thought that the natural family and home desires which most people possess would lead to their marriage even in the absence of economic necessity. Some of the reasons why so many non-farm people fail to marry, are the following:

1. In most cities the specific character of the industries maintained is of a sort to call to them through migration an excess number of young people of one sex or the other, thus throwing the sex ratio of those of marriage age out of balance. While the numbers of the two sexes in the urban population of the country are about equal, this is not the case for separate cities.

2. The sex ratio of *native-born* young people in the cities as a whole is unbalanced in the direction of an excess of women, owing to the excess farm-city migration of girls. The situation most conducive to marriage is that in which the sex ratio is in the neighborhood of 115 men to 100 women, according to Prof. W. F. Ogborn.[1]

3. Prejudice which exists to a fairly large extent in the cities against the marriage of business and professional women prevents the marriage of large numbers of the very finest types of womanhood. It is to be supposed that increasing numbers of young women when faced by the alternative of marriage or a vocation will choose the latter, just as would men in a similar situation. It seems manifestly unfair to the individual woman to be obliged to make the choice. Even if there be an excess

[1] Ogborn, W. F., "The Changing Family," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 124–145, 1929.

number of women in the cities, the removal of any of them from the marriage market tends to reduce the number of marriages made.

4. It is reasonable to suppose that young women coming to the cities from the farms are as a group less marriageable than those who remain in the country. The farm-born girls who are most attractive to the opposite sex are apt to be induced to become the wives of farmers or of men in the nearby villages. Those getting to the city may be so unattractive that they fail to find mates or so discriminating that they never meet the "right" man—which may be equivalent to saying that they do not care greatly for marriage.

5. In contrast to the country, the social life of the city is so much a matter of specialized and relatively isolated groups that many of the most eligible young people of both sexes never have the opportunity to meet and become acquainted with persons of the opposite sex under conditions that would tend to lead to marriage.

It would seem that ideally every community, both rural and urban, should be so organized industrially as to call to itself and hold equal numbers of the two sexes, so distributed through the social strata that every individual might find it possible to marry without crossing a class line to find a mate.

The presence of great numbers of unmarried foreign-born men in both rural and urban communities must be considered an abnormal condition which will be remedied only through the most severe restriction of immigration. As the country grows older, and more thickly settled, this more severe restriction will be brought about, for it is only a new land that has a place for the immigrant. Much the same thing must be said in regard to the excess of males in the Mountain and Pacific sections of the country. Our young men have gone West, and the sex balance, both East and West, has been upset in consequence. Time will rectify this abnormal situation, as it will that caused by foreign immigration.

The proper balance between the sexes is also thrown out of line through agricultural employment of large numbers of unmarried laborers. If such laborers were all very young men who were only temporarily in that work, the situation would not be so bad, even in spite of the dearth in agricultural communities of feminine companions of the same age and social status as those of the men who are hired. But the tendency, as far as it exists, toward the development of a permanent farm-labor class largely composed of mature, unmarried men is assuredly antisocial.

The low marriage rate of the cities as compared with that of farming communities is in large part responsible for the existence in the cities of a relatively greater amount of sexual irregularity in its various forms. It is also in part responsible for the low city birth rate and the resultant

lighter load of dependency which the city is obliged to carry as compared with the farming districts. We may have here a good illustration of the vicious circle. Farm-city migration may be argued to be in part the cause of low marriage and birth rates in the city. The small urban natural increase seems to make the city dependent upon migration from the farms, in order that it may experience the desired rate of growth. Young people pour in from the farms to each specific city according to whatever sex ratio the industries of that city demand, with the resultant demoralization to the normal development of sex relations, marriage, and the home. Thus, the circle is complete.

Is City Growth Dependent upon Migration from the Farm?

Professor Gillette has shown, in answer to this question, that city growth is apparently increasingly dependent upon migrants from the rural communities.[1] According to his figures, rural migration accounted for only about 30 per cent of urban increase for the decade ending in 1910, while it accounted for 45 per cent of the urban increase for the decade closing 1920. With the restrictions against foreign immigration enforced during the past ten years and with the increased cityward movement of the farm population, due undoubtedly in large part to the shutting out of the foreign immigrants, rural migration for the decade ending with 1930 must have been more largely responsible than in any previous ten-year period for the growth of the cities.

It is generally felt that the cities are becoming increasingly dependent upon migration from the farms for their continued growth. Some writers even go so far as to assert that if the cities could not draw upon agricultural population resources they would dwindle in size and finally disappear. Certain statistical studies of the declining rate of urban natural increase seem to add support to such a view. There are good reasons, however, for maintaining a certain degree of skepticism regarding such a conclusion. At least, the case has not been proved.

It must be remembered that the rapidly declining urban birth rate is taking place *along with* the in-rush of migrants from the farms. Just how the rates of birth and death in the American cities would be affected by a stoppage of rural migration from Poland and Mexico and Kentucky and Nebraska, no one is in a position to say. It may be that cities tend to fail to perpetuate themselves because of the coming of farm migrants rather than, as is generally assumed, that the farm migrants must be had because the cities cannot perpetuate themselves and provide for some increase. There is a theory maintained rather well by certain authorities in the field of foreign immigration to the effect that European immigrants do not increase the population of America by anything

[1] Gillette, John M., *Rural Sociology*, p. 94, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1928.

like the total number coming in.[1] In its extreme form this "substitution" theory states that the population of America is actually smaller than it would be, had there been no European immigration since early in the last century. One does not need to hold this substitution theory in its extreme form to believe that rural migrants to the cities have been instrumental in keeping the urban birth rate low.

From the purely scientific point of view it is unfortunate that human beings cannot be experimented with as are rats and guinea pigs. One most interesting experiment would be for the superresearch worker to pick some sizable American city and close its gates absolutely against migration, either in or out, for a period, say, of two or three centuries. The federal census figures then would indicate the true *natural* increase or decrease instead of the so-called natural increase that is obtained at the present time, and which possibly has been badly distorted by huge population movements.

One who believes that the experiment indicated above would show that a great city would be able to maintain itself without addition to its population from without might argue as follows:

1. After a time the numbers of the two sexes would become approximately equal. This would be true not only for the city as a whole but for each social class as well. With the numbers of the sexes of marrying age approximately equal, the marriage rate would supposedly become appreciably higher than it is at present.

2. The person who believes that Detroit or Chicago would be self-perpetuating in case the choice lay between that and gradual extinction might next think that, if the industrial organizations of the city were forced to depend entirely upon home-born and home-reared laborers instead of being free as now to draw cheap labor from rural communities the world over, those organizations would much more carefully conserve the city's population resources than is now being done. Wages would necessarily be higher. Men would find it economically possible to marry at an earlier age than now and to provide for more children. Laborers past middle age would take on a new value if it were not readily possible to scrap them in favor of cheap young workers of both sexes from the farms. Thus there is reason to believe that the death rate would be reduced.

Whether or not under the hypothetical conditions just sketched the urban birth rate would be sufficiently high to render the cities self-perpetuating no one can say. Obviously this would depend upon just three things: (1) Would the young men and women of the city care enough for home and family life to marry more generally than they now do? (2) Assuming the answer to the previous question to be in the affirmative,

[1] FAIRCHILD, HENRY P., *Immigration*, Chap. XI, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1925.

would these husbands and wives of the city have a sufficient desire for children to plan to have an average of three or so for each family? (3) Would they be physically able to have them? An affirmative guess for these three questions is without doubt based upon as substantial a scientific foundation as is a guess in the negative. At any rate, regarding the *natural* increase characterizing such an *unnatural* population group as the modern city, statistical conclusions seem to have little validity when they are used to predict what would occur if the city were a more natural population group such as it would be, were the great influx from without to cease.

It seems to be unquestionably a fact that eventually the *character* of the individuals living under what may be called "modern" conditions will determine whether or not American human stock and civilization may continue to persist. One may quite reasonably take the ground that modern urban civilization is perpetuated at too great a cost if its perpetuation is dependent upon keeping part of the population "rural," by which is meant keeping it living under relatively primitive conditions in order that it may serve as a constant source of cheap human material for the cities to destroy.

The Migration Outlook for the Immediate Future

In 1929, according to estimates of the Department of Agriculture, the movement from the farms to the cities was the smallest that it had been in several years. Likewise, the movement from the cities to the farms was the smallest since 1926. In other words, fewer people wherever located than has recently been the case could see an advantage in changing their locations.

It is not that people are so favorably situated that they are failing to migrate. It is rather that economic conditions are so unsatisfactory in both city and country at the present time that neither has much attractive power to bring people to it from without. There is a surplus of agricultural products, indicating that too much productive power is being used in the raising of food. There is likewise, however, long continued and widespread unemployment in the cities, indicating that they are at least temporarily overpopulated. As Arthur P. Chew of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, remarks:

> For the first time in American history, our unemployed have nowhere to go. If they are in the cities, they cannot flee to the land, because our farms already produce more than can be satisfactorily sold. If they are on the farms, they cannot go to the cities unless they wish to lengthen the bread lines.[1]

In an ideal economic world, a sufficient number of people would be producing food to supply the whole population with enough to eat. All

[1] Chew, Arthur P., "Unemployment in Agriculture," *The New Republic*, May 21, 1930.

the workers not needed to aid in the production of food would be engaged in providing other things and services for the whole consuming public to enjoy. Improved methods of agricultural production makes it possible for a smaller and smaller proportion of the nation's labor force to produce the needed amount of food, and thus a continually increasing proportion of workers is released to engage in other productive activities.

At least temporarily, the system has broken down. Great numbers in America not needed in agriculture cannot find employment elsewhere. Farm-born young men and women who, under what may be considered a normal working of economic forces, would have gone to the cities in 1929 remained on the home farms, where they still remain in 1932. They may be unprofitably employed in agriculture, but that seems better to them than city life with no employment at all. When what has been referred to as the normal working of economic forces is resumed, it is to be expected that the migration stream from the farms will immediately broaden in response. In the meantime, it is being urged that, just as many city plants are employing workers on a part-time basis involving the use of only part of the productive power of the urban labor force, farmers should deliberately restrict production by planting only a part of their acres and working a reduced number of hours.

It may be that under present conditions the best disposition to make of surplus farmers is to keep them employed on a part-time basis on the land. Possibly the most important thing to be said about such a program is that it runs very definitely counter to family-farm traditions. Urban employers and laborers have been traditionally concerned with movements for shortened hours of labor. They are also familiar with periodic shut-downs and part-time employment. If the time has now arrived, however, for the American farmer to be obliged to curtail production if he remain upon the land, and if at the same time he finds it extremely difficult to secure employment elsewhere in order that he may leave the land, American agriculture is then very definitely entering a new era which is bound to be characterized by a wide variety of changes, both economic and social, most interesting to contemplate.

CHAPTER X

MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AGRICULTURALISTS

This chapter will consider the mental nature and general mental outlook of farming people in the United States in contrast to that of people of other occupations.

Mental Capacity

Of primary importance is the matter of inherent mental ability. Whatever the individual may achieve in life is very definitely limited by what his heredity has given him in the way of potentiality for achievement. Individuals differ greatly from the standpoint of inherited mental capacity. This is one reason why they differ so greatly in their accomplishments. But capacity is not everything; it is only the beginning. Out of fairness to environmental influences and opportunities, it should be given neither the entire credit for the individual's successes nor the entire blame for his failures. It is extremely important, however, in that if it be favorable it provides the foundation for worth-while accomplishment, whereas if it be unfavorable it places an everlasting veto upon whatever environmental influences may be brought to bear.

It is the custom to think of farming people as of inferior mental capacity. There are at least two reasons for this attitude. In the first place, most people who discuss such matters are in the cities, and they quite accurately note that farming people in general are deficient in the sort of knowledge which well-informed city people possess. In the second place, there is a fairly general tendency to forget the part that environment plays in the development of intelligence and thus to blame the poorly informed countryman's heredity for his lack of information.

Results of mental tests tend to give support to the popular notions that have been entertained. In the army tests the farmers' average rating was a $C-$, as compared, for example, with C for laundry-men, $C+$ for photographers, B for accountants, and A for army chaplains. Tests given to school children, also, in general, show those from the farms rating lower on the average than others. Those who take the results of the tests seriously, however, as indicative of differences in mentality between farmers and others are open to the same criticism as are the casual observers who make no pretense to scientific precision in their conclusions. The material used in the tests is in general by its very

nature more familiar to those who live in cities than to those who live on farms; and no test has yet been devised which entirely eliminates the influences of environment. A further fault of the conclusions based upon the army tests consists in the fact that the more capable farmers were not drafted; thus those who took the tests were not a fair sample of the entire farming population.

In considering the results of tests involving school children, one must conclude either that the experience of farm children and others is quite different or that the former are mentally inferior. Those who hold that farm-born children are inherently as capable as others and those others who hold that the new instrumentalities of communication have brought to all a common fund of experience cannot both be right. The safest conclusion seems to be that the realms of experience are yet so different that no satisfactory measuring rod can now be devised with which to measure mental differences between farmers and others. Sets of questions prepared with the farm child especially in mind would be more unfair than those which have been used. This would be true because the farm child's experience is more highly specialized in an occupational way than that of most city children. It has been said that urban children should be expected to make a better showing than rural with questions involving the use of an umbrella, for example, while the opposite would be the case with a question concerning the milking side of a cow. The latter question is a technical occupational one of the same class as are simple questions, for example, relating to the use of a linotype machine. It may very well be argued that, while the farm child may not be handicapped through heredity, he is likely to be handicapped in his preparation for an adaptable participation in life because of the narrowness of his world of experience.

Even if thoroughly satisfactory tests should be devised and if through their use the conclusion were reached that farming people were on the average slightly inferior in native intelligence to the average of those not residing on farms, the practical significance of such a conclusion apparently would not be great. After all, individuals everywhere differ widely in innate ability, and they differ quite possibly to fully as great a degree in environmental opportunities to make good use of what they were given through heredity. For aught anyone may find it natural to believe to the contrary, the brightest boy in the United States may be living in one of the most backward farming communities in the country. His parents may have no incentive to be interested in his education. The school may be so poor or his chance to attend it may be so meager that he never gets further with his formal education than the acquirement of enough ability to be able barely to read and write. His practical experience may be limited to the farm, and the keenest intellect in the land, which we are assuming him to possess, is no guarantee that he will

either be even moderately successful in the farming occupation or be impelled to leave it for something else.

The theory generally held that the cities attract so many of the intellectually more capable young people away from the farms as to produce a process of constant mental deterioration in the agricultural population rests upon two very unsafe assumptions. The first of these is that farm young people are in general developing amid surroundings of a sort to stimulate into expression the potentialities with which they were endowed. The second is that enough of the mentally awakened farm individuals of better than average ability *choose* to leave the occupation of their fathers to bring about the result indicated. Theoretically it would be expected that those agricultural regions lying in closest proximity to great cities would be the ones most likely to suffer through mental depletion. Communities so located are likely to have better schools than most farming communities, and the young people in them who do well in the schools have the cities close at hand to afford them the opportunity to make use of their discovered and developed talents in various specialized ways. In the opinion of many observers certain regions in the eastern states do show the effects of mental impoverishment, owing supposedly to the causes indicated. There is no reason, however, for supposing such conditions to be general throughout rural America. Whatever may take place in our agricultural future, the safest assumption for the present is that farming people in general are as well endowed mentally as are the people of the towns and cities.

Narrowness versus Breadth of Thought World

There is general agreement among most students of the matter that the farmer lives in a narrower thought world than is the case with the man in town. The individual's field of thought is limited by his range of contacts. The farmer has fewer contacts than has the man of the city. He has to react in a mental way to relatively few people; and those few are more nearly of his own sort than is usually the case with the man in town. He does less reading of thought-provoking literature than do most members of urban professional classes. He is less likely to be a member of a discussion club than are the members of the business classes. He sees fewer motion pictures and other art portrayals of life than do the people of every urban class.

The typical farmer draws the material for his thought life from a small group of people whose experiences have not been greatly unlike his own. His parents and other relatives have done much to fix the nature and content of his thinking. He lives largely in his own family and in a social group made up of a relatively small number of others who usually hold much the same views as his own. Such reading as he does tends to be of a sort to confirm him in the opinions which he has already

established, instead of being thought-provoking in character. He is not prepared mentally by early contacts to seek out the stimulatingly different points of view which are continually finding expression in current periodical literature. In other words, his thought life is a narrow life. Farm-born individuals with out-reaching minds, other factors being equal, are the ones to leave for the more stimulating associations of the city. Although their going may not leave the country any poorer from the standpoint of capacity for thought, it does deprive it of a certain amount of thought-stimulating leadership.

That the farmer's narrowness of thought is due to his isolation no one perhaps would question. There may possibly be ground for disagreement, however, as to the nature of the isolation in which he finds himself. Some writers stress the fact that he spends much of his time physically alone. It must be clear, however, to anyone who considers the matter carefully that isolation is essentially a mental matter. The farmer's thinking runs in a narrow channel not because he spends several hours a day in the field by himself but rather because when he is in contact with others he gets very little that is new for his mind to work on. He is very far from living a solitary life, but he is cut off from frequent associations with those who would force him to deal mentally with a wide range of thought material.

Depth versus Shallowness

It apparently is a quite usual notion that what the farmer's thinking lacks in breadth it gains in depth. The assumption underlying this idea seems to be that an individual possesses a certain amount of thought energy which he is bound to use in some way—if not in working upon many matters somewhat superficially then in delving deeply as regards a few. There is, however, no such natural antithesis between breadth and depth of thought as the above notion would imply. Some men who are noted for their breadth of knowledge are also to be credited with profundity of thought. In fact, the process of "deep" thinking is a process of the development of one's ideas regarding the specific object of thought by considering it in its relationships to other ideas. Thus there can be no true depth of thought apart from a considerable breadth of knowledge.

Just what is going on in the farmer's head when he is working by himself for several hours at a time at some task which requires little thought for its performance? Moving pictures of the content of thought of a few typical farmers would, could they be taken and be made available for study, constitute a most valuable exhibit. The individual's thinking machinery can work only on such material as it has at hand, material that has come to the mind from without. If one grants that the farmer's mental material is lacking in variety, then he must admit the reasonable-

ness of the view that the farmer's mind, to the extent that it is active, is likely to be thinking over and over again the same thoughts that he has dwelt upon before. He likes to think the old thoughts—because he lacks rich sources of new mental material which would lead him naturally to think new thoughts. Because he is not prepared to consider a matter from various angles, his mind is naturally apt to repeat itself in its attack upon the object of thought from a single point of view. The farmer is thus more sure of his opinion than are the members of any other population group. He has been over the same familiar mental ground so many times that he knows his way over his beaten path to his conclusions concerning those matters that are of interest to him. This is why the farming portion of our population is more stable mentally than the urban portion. Such an adjective as "staunch" is often used to characterize the agriculturist. One is inclined to call him either staunch or stubborn, depending upon whether at any given time one does or does not feel happily disposed toward him.

Most members of the urban population cannot be given credit for any considerable profundity of thought. Leaving out of consideration those who are inherently incapable of worth-while mental activity, the one factor most largely responsible for mental shallowness in our urban society is undoubtedly the confusion in which the individual finds himself, owing to the multiplicity of conflicting suggestions constantly being borne in upon him from without. The city person suffers from having too much to think about, with too little of quiet and seclusion in which he might organize his own individual ideas into some definite form. The farmer has the quiet and seclusion but suffers from the lack of mental stimulation. Those, whether living in city or country, who make significant contributions to the thought world of humanity are, generally speaking, men and women who have ready access to a considerable body of information about life, at least partly secured through personal contact with various phases of life as it is being lived, along with the opportunity to be alone at times, away from the noise and the confusion, when they may think things through.

Conservatism

That the farmer is conservative no one would dispute. He loves to think the old thoughts, the thoughts that have come down to him pretty largely from the generations of the past. He is thus inclined not necessarily because of his inherited type of mind but rather because of his isolation from the fresh-flowing currents of new ideas. He is as likely to be distrustful of new notions as he is of unfamiliar persons. He clings to the old in religion, in morality, in ideas regarding education and the proper care of children, in farming methods—in fact, in everything that is an object of thought with him.

The forefront of social change is in the city for several reasons. Those individuals most venturesome in thought and conduct tend to congregate in the cities. With the looseness of family organization in the cities as compared with that on the farms and with neighborhood solidarity almost entirely lacking, the city person possesses a relatively large degree of freedom to give expression to his tendencies toward venturesomeness in thought and conduct. Then, too, as the city numbers in its population a wide variety of types of relatively free individuals, interest groups are easily formed to give stability and momentum to such new ideas and practices as make an attractive appeal. Finally, the means of urban communication being highly efficient, ideas spread rapidly within any city and jump easily from city to city, getting themselves into the minds of susceptible individuals with very slight delay.

Fads may spring up in the cities, gain wide acceptance, then die out without securing any real foothold in farming areas. Those new ideas and practices, however, that are successful in maintaining themselves for any length of time in the cities are quite sure eventually to spread to the farms. Conservatism does not consist in a perpetual refusal to alter one's way of thinking and of living. It is rather an attitude of mind that tends to delay the acceptance of the new. As farming people are by nature not essentially unlike their relatives who live in the towns and cities, what the latter come to regard as desirable is likely in time to win its way to acceptance with the former. Diffusion of culture traits is in general characterized by an alteration of those traits to suit the special circumstances of the group which is receiving them. The two most important factors of rural life responsible for the alteration of modes of behavior taken over from the cities are possibly the nature of the occupation of farming and that of the family organization with certain other influential factors of somewhat less importance, among which are the relatively isolated farm home and the comparatively small amount of spendable income which the average farm family has at its disposal.

With farmers of a certain type of mind, conservatism takes the form of opposition to change merely because the new idea had its origin in the city. Some advocates of a distinctively rural civilization are apt to encourage hostility to the city as such, thus aiding to build up among farming people an attitude of opposition to whatever may be thought of as urban. Human life, however, should be a much bigger thing than either rural or urban. While the farmer is undoubtedly wise to refuse to follow the city in any slavish way, it is difficult to see any wisdom in a refusal to consider a proposed change on its merits merely because such a change was first worked out by those who chanced to live in town. Conservatism undoubtedly has as essential a part to play in human thought as modernism or progressivism, but it is highly desirable that

those individuals who are to take the part of conservatives in the great and never-ending drama of social life shall be as free as possible from anything in the way of irrational hindrances to unbiased thought.

The "Country Mind"

The use of the terms "country mind" and "city mind" is extremely prevalent in the literature dealing with rural life. Their use is open to serious sociological objection. The underlying assumption seems to be that just as all of the land area of a given region may be divided into country and city, so the minds of all of the inhabitants of the region fall naturally into two types, the country type and the city type. According to this way of looking at the matter, most of the people in the country are "country minded," while most of those in the city are "city minded." When city-minded individuals develop in the country, as they frequently do, they are misfits, and the country is better off without them. Care should be exercised, it is said, to the end that ministers and teachers who are to serve in rural communities should be of the country-minded type, for those with city minds are apt to be disturbing forces in the community, filling the heads of the susceptible with city suggestions.

The basic fault, it would seem, with this way of looking at human minds is that it gives the immediately present physical environment too much credit for an ability to stamp itself with a distinctive impress upon whatever mind stuff is within reach. After all, the effective environment of a mental self is a mental environment. The normal individual has within himself the possibility of developing a most complex nature—if the fates be but reasonably kind to him. It needs only a small degree of complexity of nature to disqualify an individual entirely for a place in the country-minded, city-minded classification.

Many minds are undoubtedly narrowed to such a degree through a limitation of social contacts that they may well be thought of as corresponding rather definitely to narrowly circumscribed areas of tangible surroundings. This is true of dwellers of both city and country. Narrow minds are not at all rare. It is the function of culture to free the individual, wherever he may live and whatever may be his occupation, from narrowness of thought and feeling. The truly cultured man of any occupation is larger than his work. He has wide interests and varied tastes. Such many-sided individuals are at home in either city or country. They are attracted to fine things wherever they may be found—to the music and drama, the libraries and art galleries of the city, to the lakes and forests and green fields of the country. There are men of this sort living in every type of community, working at every kind of job. A true social progress involves an increase in the number of men and women who are of this sort.

The family-farm system engenders its own peculiar type of narrowness, and it is this latter which is at least usually meant by the term "country minded." It surely is not due to residence in a rural community or in the open country that minds become of the sort implied, neither is it mainly because of frequent and close contact with the soil; it is due rather to the whole system of family-farm influences upon the members of each on-coming generation. Through these continuing influences there is perpetuated a complex of attitudes which has come to be thought of as the "country mind." Those who fit well in the system, taking the impress of the institution and exhibiting in their lives the traditional family-farm attitudes, are the country-minded portion of our population.

Interest in Things versus Interest in People?

It sometimes is said that people naturally tend to divide themselves into two groups: those who like to work with other people and those who like to work with things, the former gravitating to the cities, the latter, to the farms. It is very likely already apparent to the reader that such a conception does not harmonize at all well with the analysis so far presented. The conformist cares as much for social contact as does the one who is impelled by the nonconformist urge. The farmer does not work in social isolation. All his life he has felt the force of social impact. Relatives and neighbors have done more to mold his thought life than have the plants and animals with which his hands busy themselves. In his maturity he exercises social control over his family and possibly over a larger circle of society. Successful farmers are not at all rare who enter most vigorously into the attempt to control the social and political life of the community. In final analysis, control of nature has meaning for the individual only as it is in some way thought of in social terms. The successful farmer takes pride in his fine farm for social reasons in the same way that the business man of the city who goes for a day's fishing not only wishes to make a fine catch but wishes his friends to know that he has made it. Control of nature gets its significance only as it becomes a sort of social control. Normal men everywhere are thinking primarily in social terms, those whose occupation keeps them busily engaged most of the time in the open country as well as those who are living principally the more complex life of the towns.

The chief difference between the farmer and the professional man, from this point of view, lies, it would seem, more in the nature of the social contacts made than in anything else. The farmer's social reactions are likely to be stereotyped while the successful lawyer, teacher, minister, or business man must be to a large extent a social experimenter, versatile in the matter of social adjustments. The natural scientist of the city as truly works with *things* in his laboratory as does the farmer on his

farm. There is a great difference, however, between these two in regard to the attitudes typical with them towards the things they handle. The farmer's reaction toward the things on his farm is just as likely to be stereotyped as are his social reactions. The natural scientist is an experimenter as truly alive to small distinctions among *things* as is the other group of men above referred to in regard to small distinctions among people. There is no reason, by the way, to suppose that the botanist cares more for the plants with which he works than he does for the opinion of men whom he is influencing through his measure of success in dealing with the plants.

The farmer differs from the urban specialist not through a unique preoccupation with *things;* the urban scientist is as busy with non-human material as is the agriculturalist. The farmer differs from the city man whose success is measured in terms of social adaptability not through any less regard on his part for his place in the social world. The farmer's distinction lies in his relatively primitive attitude toward both things and people. His range of contacts is comparatively narrow, and his type of reaction in his circumscribed world is traditional rather than experimental. There is no reason, however, for saying that primitive men, of either the past or the present, are less social than modern men. Because their range of social contacts is smaller and their social world less complex, they are none the less sensitive to the social order as they conceive it.

Such differences as exist between farmers and others in these respects are not mainly, if at all, due to the inherent natures of those concerned. The family-farm system stresses tradition and tends to develop in its individual members habits of stereotyped behavior. The modern order, to the extent that it is truly modern, stresses experimentation and demands of those individuals who would succeed in it a nicety of individual adjustment to a highly complex social scheme. The individual is neither primitive nor modern by birth. The society of which he is consciously a part tends to mold him, within certain limits laid down by heredity, to fit its own nature. The more restless sons and daughters of farmers who take themselves out of the family-farm system into the more highly complex life of the towns are faced in the new situation by the necessity of making more delicate social adjustments than would otherwise have been demanded of them. Their relatives on the farms may have within themselves as good or better possibilities for the making of such adjustments, but their failure to break from the traditional order prevents them from entering the more stimulating world of development.

Individualization versus Standardization?

A somewhat contradictory distinction to that of people *versus* things is sometimes made between farmers and others in terms of the degree of

human quality supposed to characterize the contacts made. The farmer is said to react in a more individual way to the comparatively few people with whom he has contact than does the urbanite to the many with whom he associates. In other words, the urbanite, living in a world of a great number of people and of various types, is bound to standardize his behavior, grouping those with whom he has contacts into classes for easy handling, giving the members of each class a superficial and largely impersonal sort of standardized treatment. The farmer makes so few contacts that he can consider each person of his world individually, getting beneath the external aspects of his associates to the real humanity that is theirs.

While it is true that the urbanite's social world is much more complex than that of the farmer, it does not necessarily follow that his social contacts as a whole are more superficial or impersonal. Normally, the city dweller lives in a highly specialized world. Within the field of his specialty, his highest success may depend upon his ability to individualize to a high degree the people with whom he deals. In order to be able to do this well, he must react quite largely in stereotyped ways to those whom he meets outside of the field of his specialty. One may think of the drive for social efficiency tending to produce a functional type of behavior in the case of the modern city dweller, including individual consideration in those cases where it is desired and may be of use, and tending to produce standardized behavior elsewhere. One feels the need of a humanly personal sort of contact in the case of his pastor, of his physician, and of his teachers. One does not desire this personal sort of contact from the ticket agent or the elevator boy or the taxi driver or the policeman. In addition to one's occupational behavior which tends to be developed in the direction of the felt needs of those who are being served occupationally, there are the primary-group contacts which every normal person, both rural and urban, experiences.

The farmer and the urban physician may be compared, for example, in regard to what might be expected to be their modes of reaction on three different social planes.

1. Primary Groups.—Each may be assumed to be a member of some fairly small intimate group besides the family. The farmer is much more likely to take the other members of his group for granted than is the physician. He does not demand or give the nicety of personal adjustment which obtains in the case of the latter. He accepts the others, they accept him, there is a comfortable sense of sociability in their association, but his behavior within the group is largely traditional and stereotyped. The urbanite's group is more highly selective, being based more largely upon personal congeniality than is true of the rural group. He very likely cares no more for the other members of his group than

does the farmer, but he is more socially sensitive than the latter, which makes possible a greater delicacy of social adjustments within the group.

2. Occupational Contacts.—In disposing of what he has to sell, the farmer generally feels no pressure to make himself personally agreeable to those who buy. Therefore his contacts on this level are very largely impersonal. Upon the other hand, the physician is sensitive to the demand of his patients to be known and understood. Good health is not merely a matter of treating specific physical ailments. The whole personality of the one who is ill is affected. To secure the best results, the physician must at least apparently be interested in his patient as an individual man or woman. The surest way of giving the appearance of possessing such a personal interest is actually to develop it. Other things being equal, the doctor who is by nature socially sensitive is apt to be most successful.

3. Incidental Contacts.—In addition to the primary-group and occupational relationships, each of the men considered experiences a certain number of other social contacts in the course of the routine of business and pleasure. The physician experiences a vastly greater number of these and tends to behave toward the people with whom he has such incidental contacts in a highly standardized way. Book agents, traffic policemen, messenger boys, soda fountain clerks, service station operatives, and many others must frequently be met and dealt with in some fashion. For the most part, and for the best satisfaction of all parties concerned, the association thus resulting is highly impersonal. The farmer, upon the other hand, has fewer of such contacts and is more likely to be interested in the individuals through whom these contacts arise. He tends, however, to exercise no more insight in the case of such incidental contacts than does the urbanite, for generally he is not trained in such matters. His own personal eccentricities are probably at all times in evidence, and because of his peculiarities he is likely to call attention to himself in various phases of life where the intrusion of personality is a hindrance rather than an aid to the development of the highest efficiency. The incongruity of situations of this sort is a traditional source of material for the humorist.

The farmer cares as much for people as does the urbanite. There seems to be no reason, however, for giving to him more credit than to the man of the city for penetrative insight into the personalities of those with whom he has contact. Any general charge of superficiality against the urbanite because of his numerous contacts does not apparently rest upon a substantial basis in fact. High success within his specialized field is dependent upon the exercise of insight into the natures of those with whom he deals within that field. Superficiality outside of the field of his specialized professional or business contacts and outside of his

primary groups is functional in nature, a sign of efficient adjustment to modern life rather than otherwise.

Natural versus Artificial?

Another distinction quite frequently made between farmers and others is that the former are living in a world of nature, while the others, mainly urbanites, are surrounded by artificiality. The distinction does not seem to be well made. While it is obviously the case that the farmer at his work spends more of his time out of doors than do most men in other occupations, just what the significance of this fact may be is not at all clear.

Practically all people in a civilized world live amidst artificiality if one means by artificial something made or modified by human ingenuity and labor. Man has long been at work in both country and city transforming the things of nature to make them more suitable surroundings for mankind—to make them better serve the needs and desires of humanity. In choosing an occupation and a place to live, one's choice lies between different sorts of artificiality rather than between the natural and the artificial. If he chooses the farm, he does not choose wild nature or anything very closely resembling it. There are buildings for various purposes in which he will spend much of his time. While out of doors, he will work very largely with man-made machinery, with domesticated breeds of livestock which he may quite possibly attempt to improve through artificial selection, with domesticated trees and plants of various sorts artificially arranged on his land. The ploughed surface upon which he will walk, or over which he may ride at his work, is as truly artificial as the smoother but harder surface upon which the urbanite spends most of his time.

If he chooses urban artificiality in preference to rural, he probably will spend more of his time within doors. If he should chance to be of the less successful classes of the city, his health may suffer because of the lack of sufficient light and pure air. If, upon the other hand, he should be fairly successful he will be able to spend a considerable amount of time in the open, at the golf course, or driving over country roads, or vacationing at the sea shore or in the mountains. If he is very successful, he may surround himself with whatever combination of urban and rural forms of artificiality may suit his taste.

This matter is very often discussed from the standpoint of the comparative health and length of life of rural and urban people. Upon the whole, rural health seems to be somewhat better than urban, and the average length of life somewhat greater. It is easy to assume that the reason for the difference may be explained in terms of the "naturalness" of the country and the "artificiality" of the city. The country dweller has sunlight and fresh air, the soil, the growing plants and trees and

animals, the flowing streams, the sky, the wind, the rain; while the urbanite spends the most of his time, both at work and at recreation, surrounded by massive walls of stone and steel, with smoke-laden air to breath, and sewage-polluted water to look upon and possibly to bathe in in his attempt to make a contact with the things of nature.

The difficulty with such an analysis as this is that the situation is not nearly so simple as the explanation seems to imply. The middle and upper classes of non-farm people seem to be more healthy and longer lived than the people on the farms, supposedly owing largely to more healthful surroundings than farmers possess. Thus, if "natural" is to be identified with the physically wholesome or healthful, one would be obliged to conclude that the more fortunate people of the cities are living more natural lives than are generally lived upon farms. He would be obliged to conclude that the less healthy and long-lived lower classes of the city were suffering because of their unfavorable situation within the city rather than because of the "unnaturalness" of an urban existence as such.

Individualism

As compared with a typical urbanite, the farmer is known as an individualist. The idea which such a characterization is intended to convey is that the farmer stands relatively alone while the man of the city is part of some system. Most people of the city take their orders from some one higher in the economic system. Social and political life in the cities tends to develop into hierarchies with cliques and machines and bosses. The successful city man or woman is quite sure to have learned the value of teamwork, which means that to succeed in any phase of the complex urban world, it is necessary to make personal adjustments to others with whom one is closely associated. The typical farmer, upon the other hand, glories in the fact that he takes orders from no boss.

It may well be argued, however, that the farmer is as truly a part of a system as any other man. The controls which shape his conduct reach from the past in the form of tradition instead of coming out of the present through contacts with his contemporaries. He may say that he is free to stop work when he pleases and go fishing instead of waiting for the blowing of a whistle. If his father and grandfather were men of a certain sort, however, he is not likely to lay off work in the busy season because of any urge to express an individualistic self. The same traditional forces that govern his working habits go a long way to determine his thinking and his conduct in the fields of politics and social reform as well as in those of morality and religion. The farmer is not in any phase of his life an uncontrolled self. One of the great questions before America at the present is whether or not the controlling forces to which he responds may be modernized. The hope upon which the present program of the

Federal Farm Board is based is that they may be. Those men who succeed best in the present order and in a so-called "self-directed" way are for the most part men who have previously learned to follow the directions of others who are themselves successful in a modern scheme of life. The farmer is not lacking in discipline, but it is too largely a discipline of a primitive sort, which is more or less a matter of submissiveness to natural and traditional forces. This results in his so-called "individualism," an anomalous characteristic in a modern world.

The Democratic Mind

It has been said by certain writers that the best hope for democracy lies in the farming class because of the fact that the urban mind is so largely controlled by forces outside of itself of the nature of bosses and machines. The assumption underlying such a statement is that the farmer is free to think independently. If the reasoning of the previous paragraph is valid, the farmer is no more free than other men; thus there is no more reason to look for the advancement of true democracy in agricultural communities than elsewhere. Whether in city or in country, those men and women are best able to make an intelligent contribution to democratic tendencies in any phase of life who have developed for themselves among other things a broad vision of existing human needs and a sense of personal responsibility for helping toward the meeting of those needs. Individuals in every sort of community are hampered by forces that are undemocratic in nature. The temptation is always present for the person to allow others to do his thinking for him. The situation is as truly undemocratic whether one allows himself to be jostled through life as an unthinking member of an urban crowd or rides along instead on the waves of blind rural tradition. City conditions are in general more conducive than those of the country toward the development of individuals who combine in themselves a broadly human point of view with an urge to social activity. Therefore, the city should be expected to lead in the exemplification of democratic tendencies.

Standards of Morality

It is customary to say that the farmer's standards of morality are higher than those of the city and that rural moral conditions are in general more wholesome than urban. The thing that is meant, apparently, is that the farmer clings more tenaciously to traditional moral customs than do city residents. Moral ideas are subject to evolution. As in every other phase of social evolution, there are aspects of change and aspects of stability. Neither of these two opposing tendencies may be thought of as more nearly right in any absolute sense than the other. Those who as a matter of principle throw their influence upon the side of stability are likely to consider the exponents of moral change to be dangerously

immoral people. Upon the other hand, those who are interested in developing new moral standards or who deliberately violate traditional standards may possibly be as completely out of sympathy with the conservatives. That life is essentially a matter of conflict is no where better illustrated than in the process of the evolution of moral ideals. There is conflict between ideas even if interested individuals holding opposing viewpoints are personally tolerant toward those who differ from them. Rather more tolerance is likely to be displayed by the advocates of change than by those of stability or fixity. This would naturally be expected to be the case because the newer codes of morality tend to stress tolerance as an important virtue. Sometimes, however, we are presented with a spectacle of men and women intolerantly advocating tolerance, while condemning intolerance in others.

The individual's moral standards or ideals of conduct are as truly representative of his nature as anything can be. He is what he is because of the influence of the various forces that have played upon his life; his moral standards are what they are because his character is what it is. His emotional nature is brought into play as much as is his narrowly intellectual nature in determining his moral outlook. In fact, it is what he *feels* to be right that is the decisive factor in determining his moral standards rather than what he *thinks* to be right. The young person migrating from a somewhat isolated rural community to a great city is likely to undergo considerable personal change. New influences are operating upon his nature in place of the old. He is, in consequence, transformed to a greater or lesser extent into a new person. When he thinks in terms of moral conduct, he has new elements to take into account, and his conclusions are quite surely to be different from those that he formerly reached. At the same time he *feels* differently about things, too. He has made new friends, which implies the development of new admirations. He actually has become a citizen of a new world with correspondingly altered standards of conduct. The change may or may not have been beneficial for him. In either case, the people back home are likely to view his alteration of character and conduct with apprehension and possibly with dismay.

The rural person is more likely to be sure of his own mind regarding questions of morality than is the man of the city, just as he is more likely to have fixed opinions elsewhere throughout his whole field of thought—and for the same reasons. His life is more simple, his social contacts are fewer, the forces of tradition are stronger with him, his life's course is more largely one of routine in which he builds up certain well-established habits of thinking and feeling and doing. His character embodies both the virtues and the vices of fixity. Some people of the city stand at the other end of the scale, characterized by extremely changeable natures. The confusion of contemporary urban life is too much for

them. They see neither right nor wrong in sharply outlined form and thus have little, if anything, in the nature of definitely established moral convictions. They are open to new ideas, which of itself is a desirable trait. They have so little definiteness of character, however, that they are in no position to select, from the multitudinous suggestions afforded them, those ideas that they could use to advantage in the development of valuably constructive lives. It should go without saying that those individuals, wherever they may live, who in a broad view of things are making the greatest success of their lives from the moral standpoint are characterized by stability without being inflexible. They are intellectually and emotionally sensitive to the constantly changing life of the outer world without being in any great danger of being overwhelmed by the forces of change.

While there are men and women of the last type living on farms, traditional conditions of development are not favorable to their appearance there. The factors of rural isolation, which have heretofore been mentioned, tend strongly toward the inculcation of static conceptions of right. Morality becomes a matter very largely of taboos with people who live under relatively primitive conditions, in the present day just as it was with their primitive ancestors of the distant past. The moral person in such a community is one who scrupulously refrains from doing certain things. Each primitive group, whether of the past or of the present, has its own list of acts which "good" people do *not* do. The reasons why these acts are proscribed are in the main traditional. The venturesome individual who would attempt to lead in the rational consideration of one of the forbidden acts would quite surely be made to feel the force of group disapproval.

As an illustration of one of the proscribed acts, may be mentioned the smoking of cigarettes by women. During the past few years this practice has spread very rapidly in the cities. While, a short time ago, the only women in America who smoked, at least in public, were those who were considered to be of a generally disreputable character, at the present time women of every urban class are in rapidly increasing numbers smoking cigarettes. The diffusion of this culture trait is to be thought of supposedly as but one minor phase of the general development in the direction of so-called "feminine emancipation." For some women it is undoubtedly an unfortunate phase in this development. A visitor from another planet, however, entirely free from our traditions would be unable to understand why women might not as appropriately indulge themselves as men, in the absence of medical evidence that such indulgence is in general more harmful to women than to men. *Farm and Fireside* recently conducted a poll of its readers (January, 1930) in which among other matters, an opinion was asked as to whether it was considered proper for a farm magazine to advertise cigarettes for women.

Eighty-four per cent of those voting, a larger proportion than in the case of any other proposition, expressed a negative opinion. It is to be assumed that, while some of those voting in the negative were quite sure in their own minds that health factors render smoking undesirable for women, most of the voters did not get that far with their thinking. The latter were merely setting their faces against change, just as people of the Neolithic age probably opposed the introduction of minor modifications in the methods of making pottery. If they had been asked to express themselves further in the matter, they very likely would have made statements such as, "Nice women do not smoke," "I do not like to see a woman smoking," "Smoking by women is unrefined." They would have made the same sort of statements, in fact, that were made of those women who were the first to attend institutions of higher learning in America.

The point of issue in the *Farm and Fireside* poll was not whether this or that woman should or should not smoke any more than it was whether specific women should or should not drink coffee or tea or eat chocolates or chew gum. It was rather whether a farm magazine might with propriety advertise the fact that the smoking of cigarettes was being done by women and that cigarettes were on sale for those women who chose to buy. The negative vote was thus a vote against allowing farm women a choice as to whether they should or should not adopt for themselves a new practice of admittedly doubtful value.

So much space has been devoted to the above discussion in order to stress the fact of the farmer's conservative attitude regarding those matters which he considers to be of moral significance. The advertising of cigarettes for women has been mentioned especially because it is the question which drew the largest negative vote of any in a recent canvassing of opinion—84 per cent. A large negative vote, 72 per cent of the total, was cast against the advertising of cigarettes, not specifically for women. Only 42 per cent were opposed to the advertising in farm magazines of tobacco in general. Seventy-eight per cent voted for strict enforcement of the prohibition amendment. Eighty-one per cent went on record against divorce being made easier to obtain. The farm vote is a conservative vote obviously because farmer minds are conservative minds and there are perfectly understandable reasons within the conditions of their life to account for the conservatism of their minds.

Change the conditions which surround a person and you change his moral outlook. Many people in America are opposed to birth control on what they feel to be moral grounds. One might suppose that the farmer group mentioned above, that took such a strongly conservative attitude regarding cigarettes for women, prohibition repeal, and divorce, would stand as strongly against legalizing the dissemination of birth-control information. As a matter of fact, however, only 33 per cent

were opposed to the last-suggested change. The editors of *Farm and Fireside* convincingly suggest that the liberal attitude registered on this matter is to be accounted for on economic grounds. When large families are felt to be expensive on farms as is evidently coming to be the case, then morality comes to the aid of the movement for voluntary parenthood. Where no economic advantage is to be hoped for from change, the farmer has tended to cling tenaciously to the old moralities. In this attitude he has not differed from the still more primitive peoples of by-gone days. The users of stone hatchets at first felt it to be immoral to change to hatchets of steel. Upon being convinced, however, that the latter would be advantageous in the struggle for a material existence, their scheme of morality was changed at one point while remaining pretty much intact elsewhere.

Dr. J. M. Williams remarks that in the early days in America, specifically in New York, the farmers' moral standards were in general determined by economic considerations.[1] The great virtues were those which made for economic success in a relatively simple social system, such as industry, steadfastness, thrift, and self-restraint. Even traditional ideas concerning sexual morality, in the opinion of Dr. Williams, are to be accounted for largely on economic grounds. The more isolated the rural community, the more tenaciously traditional moral ideals are held to. The family-farm system itself is to a very large extent an isolating agency, however close to the city a specific farm home may be. The new communication, however, is making for a liberalization of the rural moral code and increased prosperity of many farmers has softened the rigors of old-time austerity. Other farmers who are not in the least prosperous are beginning to spend money for luxuries that go with a way of life that would have seemed to their grandparents positively immoral.

While, in general, agricultural communities maintain traditional standards much more tenaciously than do urban communities, farming people are by no means homogeneous as regards morality. Certain communities in the country are much addicted to the use of "home brew" in spite of the fact that farmers as a class "vote dry and drink dry." Other communities are characterized by much in the way of so-called "sexual looseness," notwithstanding the general emphasis among farming people upon conventional standards regarding sex. In other communities still other variations are to be observed from the standards generally held among rural people. These expressions of nonconformity are due in many instances to the development of variant traditions in isolated regions, not at all to be accounted for on the grounds of city influence. In certain cases depths of depravity are reached among

[1] Williams, J. M., *Our Rural Heritage*, Chap. XXIV, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1925.

pleasant country surroundings as low as any to be found among the most degenerate groups of the cities.

Whether, in general, city or country people are the more moral obviously depends entirely upon the point of view. Differing standards are adaptations to different sets of conditions. The individual who measures up to the standards held by his group is said by his group to be moral, and that is about as far as one can go with certainty. What we are after, of course, is wholesome living, and what one considers wholesome living is dependent upon the conditions which surround him, including the traditional factors and the influences of early training.

Primitive and modern ideas regarding morality are diametrically opposed in that while the primitive thinks of right and wrong as unchanging, the modern conceives them to be subject to constant change. They are so opposed because the conditions of life of which the primitive was conscious were practically unchanging, while the modern thinks of change as the most characteristic feature of life as he experiences it. There are any number of city residents, not all of them members of the labor class, whose lives are essentially dull and monotonous and unchanging, people whose viewpoint is really primitive. On the farms are to be found some, and undoubtedly an increasing number of, people who are thoroughly alive to the fact of change and to the desirability of readjusting themselves and their points of view to the changing scene. In general, however, it must be said that the farmers' attitudes are relatively primitive when compared with those held in the cities.

One of the chief criticisms to be made of the separate-rural-civilization program of country life, including standards of morality as well as all else, is that such a program may not prepare for successful living the great number of young people who will spend their lives in the city. Whether farm-reared young people who go to the city furnish more than their share of urban moral maladjustment, there seems to be no satisfactory way of ascertaining. In any case, children wherever reared stand in great danger of personal demoralization if they have been taught when young in terms of the primitive code of unchanging right and wrong. To live fully and at the same time with stability and poise in the midst of external confusion requires the possession of flexible natures which may successfully adapt themselves to new situations instead of being broken.

CHAPTER XI

THE FARM HOME AND FAMILY

The ideal function of every social institution is to contribute fullness of life to the individuals concerned. An institution may never properly become an end in itself. The family exists for man, not man for the family. That form of family life and that type of home are best which contribute most to the enrichment of the lives of men, women, and children. If any distinction can be made, it is the children which must be given first consideration. Place of residence, nature of occupation, and everything else which may be considered are of secondary importance. This leads naturally to the question, what is a good home?

Some Essentials of a Good Home

1. The parents must combine with natural parental affection a knowledge of the nature of childhood in both its physical and mental aspects. This involves the securing of up-to-date information in both hygiene and psychology.

2. Intense family loyalty must be fostered through a wise leadership upon the part of the parents. It is leadership rather than domination that is needed, and leadership involves a combination of significant achievement upon the part of the leaders with sympathy, or understanding, for those who are to follow. The parents should have the respect of their children, and this they can secure and retain only by appearing to the children worthy of respect in comparison with other children's parents.

3. Parental association with the children should be equally shared. There should be no opportunity for the notion to develop in a child's mind that the father's function is merely to pay the expenses.

4. The children, from early childhood on, should be required to share the responsibility for the success of the family ventures. There should be discipline, involving among other things the enforced necessity of the child's performance of certain regular tasks well suited to his age and physical strength.

5. There must be adequate leisure for recreation. Play spaces in contact with nature must be available, at least for young children. The whole family should frequently play together, and the children should have ready association with other children of the same age for play among wholesome surroundings.

6. The family should afford the child a vital contact with some of the varied phases of the complex life of the modern world. This involves the bringing into the home of wisely chosen books and magazines, also family discussion of world-important topics about the dinner table or the fireside. The family, as a family, will, where practicable, visit important places, listen to noted speakers, and hear great artists in their concerts, in fact, familiarize themselves with all artistic production.

7. At a fairly early age, the child should be encouraged and even required to live a somewhat independent life of his own, not entirely encompassed by the family circle. Besides being a member of a family, the child is also an individual member of the larger society. He should be aided to develop self-reliance through the give and take of actual living in this larger society.

Great numbers of homes embodying the above characteristics are to be found in both city and country, and, assuming the parental ideals to be wholesome, wherever such homes are found, they are good homes. Without doubt, some few handicapped individuals are constantly making their way to success even if they have lacked the advantages of good home life. The home influence is not the only one to touch childhood. Teachers, ministers, scout leaders, neighbors, friends sometimes fill the gap left open by parental neglect or inefficiency. There are individuals who succeed well in life in the face of what appears to be an entire lack of encouragement and aid. The achievements of these isolated individuals, however, would seem to no one to be sufficient reason for minimizing home influence. There would be general agreement that failure in home life would be expected to result in a corresponding impoverishment of the lives of those who come from the home. Nearly all thoughtful people would agree in saying that dangers to the home are the most vital dangers a society is obliged to face. Some of the more common dangers to which home life is subjected are neither rural nor urban in character but rise out of the ignorance or carelessness or poverty of the parents. The great mass of parents, both rural and urban, are too ignorant, careless, or poor to give to their children the start in life which childhood must have if it is to achieve any large part of the success which it is inherently capable of achieving. Some home failures, however, are distinctively urban in character, while others are of a rural or, more specifically, of a family-farm type.

Some Dangers to Urban Family Life

Urban society runs more to extremes of wealth and poverty than does that of the open country. Extreme wealth and extreme poverty—each condition carries with it a distinctive sort of danger to the wholesomeness of home life. Families in both of these conditions are likely to be weak and ineffective agencies for child rearing. The children of the poor

are likely to suffer from an enforced parental neglect due to long hours of work away from home by both parents. The home surroundings are usually unwholesome in various ways. Crowded, insanitary dwellings, lack of proper play facilities, lack of cultural stimuli within the home, lack, possibly, even of proper amounts and sorts of food and of sufficient medical attention characterize much of the home life of the poor. The children of the wealthy naturally are in general much better cared for physically than are those of the poor. Their mental life, however, may be as badly distorted through parental carelessness and neglect.

All classes of city homes must meet, more than is generally the case in the open country, with dangers arising from outside competition. All phases of city life—industrial, educational, recreational, religious—are organized in terms of *individual* needs. Each individual, old or young, may live a fairly well-rounded life in the city with an almost total lack in the way of family association. This is not the case in rural society where the child receives a greater proportion of influences only through the home.

If city parents are to maintain the respect of their children, so essential to a proper sort of home relationship, they must meet a harder competition than that which faces the usual farmer. The city is full of such a variety of successful and apparently successful people, and these various types come so readily into the view of the observing child that he quite naturally contrasts his parents with other people to an extent that would rarely be possible to the young child on the farm. This city competition is fatal to the best kind of family relationship of many families. Unless a child can feel that his parents are important people, his morale is sure to be adversely affected. In such a situation, he may turn his back upon his family and search elsewhere for something to which he may give his allegiance and through relationship with which he may derive a much-needed self-respect. If of a weaker or less ambitious sort, he may cling despairingly to the family in an attitude of defeat.

Some Farm-family Dangers

The typical farm family suffers from neither extreme wealth nor extreme poverty. Because of a higher degree of geographical isolation and because, too, of the nature of the industry, it is shielded from the multiplicity of distracting suggestions which the city home experiences. For these reasons the home on the farm is characterized by a higher degree of solidarity than is to be seen elsewhere, and the farm parents occupy a relatively more secure position in the esteem of their children than is elsewhere likely to be the case. Notwithstanding these facts, it is not at all clear that farm homes are in general any better than those of the city.

The seven essentials of a good home, as outlined above, may be considered, point by point, as they apply to farm life:

1. While farm parents very likely care as much for their children as do others, evidence seems to indicate that they are rather more apt to be ignorant than are members of the corresponding classes in the cities regarding the best sort of child care. Tradition has a stronger hold upon them. They are less likely to search for the most up-to-date ideas concerning the child's physical and mental make-up, and his corresponding needs. Since the farm family is more likely to include members of an older generation, tradition and conservatism in child care are thereby reinforced.

2. Family loyalty is without doubt much stronger on the farm than is general elsewhere. It is a loyalty, however, very largely the product of isolation and tradition. Where this is the case, there is grave danger that those children who leave home for the city, as increasing numbers do, will make a more complete break with their families than do those whose early home life has been lived under more free conditions. Farm tradition sanctions parental domination. If parents follow the line of least resistance, ruling through domination rather than leadership, their hold upon the children will probably be abruptly broken when the children leave home.

3. Parental association with the children is more equally shared on the farms than in the towns. Farm children see as much of their father as of their mother. The father counts for more in the farm family than is usual elsewhere. He actually directs the work of the children and is apt to be more intimately concerned with all of the various details of their bringing up than are those fathers who live in the more highly specialized life elsewhere. This, as far as it goes, is a real advantage of farm life. Fathers in the towns may spend much time with their children and many of them do this. In the towns, however, it is less usual and comes somewhat in the nature of a positive achievement, while on the farm it is a following of the line of least resistance and therefore is the usual situation.

4. Children on the farms learn at an early age to shoulder responsibility. There is grave danger, however, that this valuable principle may be overdone. The farm occupation, being a *family* undertaking, is likely to rest with too great weight upon immature shoulders. There is so much to be done that each individual is expected to give of his utmost, especially in the busy seasons. The temptation is always present to overwork the child. Ideally, there should be, in the first place, a careful, sympathetic determination of the nature and amount of work which each child should perform and, in the second place, such an administration of the enterprise that each child would be shielded from the possibility of doing more than he should.

The family-farm institution does not adapt itself at all readily to such a process of watchful solicitation for the welfare of the child. The

traditions are against it. Parents who are more concerned for the proper development of their children than they are for the success of their farming venture are likely to have a most difficult time in the occupation. Their pathway is bound to be an arduous road of nonconformity. Parents who free themselves from family-farm traditions to the extent indicated probably make up a large part of the farm-urban migrants.

Primarily, the labor of children is properly for the sake of the child, rather than for the sake of the work accomplished. The work should be viewed as a more or less valuable by-product of the proper development of the child. One of the chief counts against the farm home is that traditionally the child is valued in terms of present working ability rather than in those of his possibility for development under good conditions into efficient adulthood. The testimony of successful men in various walks of life to the effect that their success is due to the development in early childhood of habits of long hours of heavy farm labor is frequently misleading. It tells nothing more than that in their individual cases the sort of childhood life they led did not prevent the sort of success which they later achieved. It does not indicate what these same men might have become had they been privileged to experience a different type of early home life.

5. The open country furnishes the child opportunity for contact with nature. The farm child does not lack readily accessible play spaces. In a very large proportion of farm homes, however, the parents are unable for various reasons to function as play leaders for their children, and in many cases they are not even sympathetically inclined as regards the recreational needs of childhood. Very largely, too, young farm children have meager opportunity for play with others of the same age, with still less opportunity for choice of playmates.

6. The coming of the automobile and the good roads have given the farm family a greatly increased opportunity for travel. Increasing numbers of farm-born young people are living within widely expanded horizons, as compared with the situation a generation ago. There is an ever-present danger, however, of the family on the farm, even with this change in means of communication, living too self-centered an existence, both geographically and socially. Even the taking of long and frequent motor trips does not necessarily make for an enriched mental life. Vital contacts are needed with a variety of stimulating personalities. Travel and reading and radio, from this point of view, are only means to an end. Unless there be sympathetic leadership and interpretation upon the part of the parents, much benefit made possible through the new means of communication will be lost.

7. Family solidarity is in danger on the farms of being stressed to such an extent that the child arrives at adulthood deficient in the self-reliance so essential for successful living in the modern world. Large

numbers of farm-reared children who are inherently capable of contributing much in the way of individual accomplishment in the strenuously competitive social system of the present day are destined to fail, simply because of a lack of self-confidence. Many of these people continue on the farms of their birth rather because they are afraid to attempt anything else than because they have been positively attracted to the occupation of agriculture.

Farm and City Homes Contrasted

Any sweeping generalization to the effect that farm homes are superior to those in the city, or *vice versa*, would seem to be ill-based. There is the possibility of organizing an ideal home life in either type of community. In each case there are characteristic difficulties to be faced, and each type of community affords its peculiar sort of aids to those who are attempting to maintain the proper kind of home life for their children. Poor city homes may hardly, with fairness, be blamed upon the city, as such. Great numbers of city parents who are not handicapped by extreme poverty are most successful in their family organization and in the management of their homes. In the aggregate, they are putting a vast amount of conscientious effort into the undertaking. The achievement of a successful home under modern urban conditions is not at all an impossible task, but it is difficult enough to call out the best that efficient men and women have to offer in the way of intelligent administration.

Neither with fairness may poor farm homes be blamed upon country life, as such. There is good reason, however, for charging a large share of the failure to the family-farm system. The very existence of the system, so far as one may see, calls for a suppression in various ways of the individualities of children. In spite of the system, great numbers of intelligent farm parents are organizing and maintaining as efficient homes as any that one may find. Each case of this sort, however, must be viewed as exceptional, an achievement that leads the curious observer to ask just how in this particular case have the parents freed themselves and their children from the limitations characteristic of the system. One obviously must rule out that relatively small group of farmers who, because of unusual conditions, are not operating on the family-unit basis, also those who are not, strictly speaking, farmers at all, but who are merely living on farms while drawing a considerable part of their incomes from other than farm sources. The home problems of both of these groups do not differ essentially from those of urban residents.

The problem of typical family-farm parents is of an entirely different sort from that of typical middle-class city parents who are obliged to face the competition of outside interests of one sort or another. Improvement in city homes is to be largely sought through renunciation—a

putting up of barriers against decentralizing influences, each of which may be wholesome enough in itself, but which taken together tend to overwhelm the home. This curtailment would in most cases actually save expense as well as make possible the greater stressing of home life. Upon the farms, however, the case is quite different. There, in general, improvement would cost money, in part through decreased production due to shortened hours of labor, in part through actual expense for books, magazines, music, travel, and other liberalizing agencies. The farm family finds its worst dangers within its own organization. It is narrowness that must be combated. The demand is for broadening influences that must be actively sought. They are not right at the door as is the case of the city home. Walls of isolation, both physical and mental, must be penetrated if these finer values are to be obtained.

The first difficulty to be met with on the farms from the standpoint of the achievement of a richer home life is the cultural narrowness of the parents themselves. The parents are almost all of them products of the family-farm system of living. Their values have been derived quite exclusively from that source. Thus they are very naturally impelled to inculcate the traditional point of view in their children. If in their youth they had rebelled at all vigorously against the traditional scale of values, they probably would have eliminated themselves from the farm community. The very fact that they are still there is pretty good evidence that their way of looking at life is not greatly at variance with the traditional point of view.

In the second place, whatever farm parents may desire for themselves and their children, the economic situation tends to be such as to force upon them a relatively low standard of living. This low standard of living should not be ascribed to poverty. The farm and equipment may be worth many thousands of dollars and be free of debt, without affording the family an income sufficient to pay for more than a most meager existence. The farmer's self-respect and his prestige in the rural community are largely based on his wealth. His children's opportunity for successful development into well-rounded personalities capable later of giving a good account of themselves in association with urban-trained young people depends largely upon a cultured home life. In a large proportion of cases, well-to-do farmers actually cannot afford to pay from their incomes for such a home life, involving as it does both leisure and expense. Every year great numbers of them sell or rent their farms and change their occupation with the main purpose in mind of giving their children a better chance.

Another difficulty which tends to prevent the achievement of an enriched home life on the farms is the fact that the income is so largely irregular and uncertain. In those classes of society in which the income is received in weekly or monthly installments of fairly definite amount

and in which the total annual income is more than sufficient to pay for the bare physical necessities, there is favorable opportunity for the setting aside of something for cultural advancement. A program extending over a period of years may be mapped out, based upon fairly definite knowledge regarding future income. In the case of most farmers, the income does not come in this regular way. The main part of it is apt to be received in relatively large amounts and at infrequent intervals, when the wheat is sold, or the fruit, or the potatoes, or the hogs.

When the farmer experiences an unusually profitable year and the income has been received largely in a lump sum of a few hundred or possibly of a few thousand dollars, the natural tendency is to keep it together, using it to pay for some comparatively large undertaking. The whole of the surplus may be spent on the industry. It may all be used to purchase more land, or stock, or equipment. It may, upon the other hand, be used for what the family considers a luxury. Something which possibly has been desired for many years is obtained in generous but indigestible portions. A fine house may be built but never completely finished. Sets of expensive books may be bought whose only real use may be to serve as ornamentation in a seldom-used parlor. An expensive motor car may be purchased, or an extended vacation trip may be taken—something of an impressive nature with no possibility of any adequate preparation for its proper enjoyment. After it has been acquired, several "bad" years following may leave it an isolated and somewhat grotesque venture into the realm of the spirit.

Just why it should be so frequently asserted even by thoughtful persons that farm children generally enjoy a better home life than do city children is somewhat of a question. Sometimes, apparently, it is due to an overstressing—sometimes sentimental—of the "solidarity" aspect of family life as compared with the "freedom" aspect which is assuredly of equal importance. In some cases, it seems to be due to an overemphasis of the physical. Because the members of the farm family spend more hours of the day together—at work, at meals, and at recreation—it is assumed that there exists among them a greater unity of spirit. Interviews with a large number of university students whose homes are in the city reveal the existence there of a great deal of fine family loyalty which is capable of surviving in spite of much physical separation. It certainly is the case that "home" is essentially a matter of mental relationship rather than a physical place. Undoubtedly, also, too much is made of the comparatively few spectacular cases of urban family failure. Sometimes the comparison is apparently made between the farming class as a whole, and the lower laboring classes of the city, which obviously is unfair. In certain cases one is drawn to the conclusion that the writer is simply rationalizing an emotionally hostile attitude toward the city. He is "flag waving" for the country

and is no more discriminatingly impartial in his attitude than one is likely to be when in a flag-waving mood.

There can be little question that the home in general does mean more to the farm child than to others. That of itself is not necessarily an advantage. As Groves remarks, "The home may penetrate a child's life deeply and yet affect it badly."[1] It is also true that home failure on the farms is as a rule more serious in its consequences than urban home failure. In the cities, various helpful agencies stand ready to pick up the child and give him what they can of inspiration and of aid. Since the country is more largely devoid of such agencies, the fate of children on farms is more completely in the hands of their families.

The Lives of Farm and City Women Contrasted

Thus far in this chapter attention has been fixed upon the child as a member of the family. There is good reason for giving the child this primary consideration. If it were not for the children, the various complementary functions of the two sexes might conceivably be carried on quite well in a world entirely lacking in family organization. With parental regard for children, however, as firmly established in human nature as it is, and with this love of man and woman for the same child providing a common interest for the two in the welfare of the child, there is a substantial basis in society for the existence of the family. As long as this common love for and interest in children continue, it is difficult to take very seriously the fears of those who pessimistically prophesy the downfall of the family institution.

Woman, as the bearer of the child, has most of the way through the course of the evolution of the family been thought of as having her existence at the very center of family life. During the remainder of the chapter, attention will be directed especially to the woman in her family relationships. The contrasting conditions as they exist at the present time on the farm and elsewhere in our national life will be stressed.

Contrasted Opportunities for Choice

The farm woman as contrasted with the women of the cities lives a relatively circumscribed existence. For her, there are fewer suggestions from which to choose. Life comes to her very largely molded by tradition. Her part is to do the expected thing in the system of which she is a member. The urban woman is a product of a later phase of social development than is typical upon the farm. Evolution and progress are not always the same thing. It may conceivably be, as some writers insist, that the women of the towns, in their more or less radical departure from the ways of life general among farmer ancestors, are actually living

[1] Groves, Ernest R., *Rural Problems of Today*, Association Press, New York, 1918.

upon a *lower* rather than upon a *higher* plane than did those ancestors and than do the women on the farms of the present day. Whatever one may conceive to be the ideal situation as regards the part of woman in modern life, there can be no question that there is now a fairly sharp line of distinction between farm women and others of the same general classes in society, and that this distinction may be largely described in terms of contrasting opportunities for choice. The city woman enjoys a higher degree of individual independence than does the woman on the farm.

Marriage.—In the first place, the town woman is free to choose not to marry. The great majority of urban women do marry, and many others undoubtedly think of themselves as marriageable provided a suitable mate should offer himself. It is perfectly possible, however, for the woman in the city to live a normal, wholesome sort of life outside of marriage. While city women who wish to marry do not always get their wish, those who wish not to are free to remain single. Though there are a few cases of single women managing and operating farms, in general, farm women may hardly be said to be free to remain on the farms without marrying. The family-farm institution with its economic emphasis upon the home leaves little choice to either men or women not to marry. It is not merely almost an economic necessity; the pressure of community opinion is more insistently favorable to marriage than is the case with urban opinion. The assumptions in the country are on the side of marriage, while this is not so clearly the case in the city.

In the second place, city women who are contemplating marriage occupy a better bargaining position than do those on the farms. In general, their contacts with eligible men are more numerous. They have a wider field to choose from in marriage, and they have always the possibility of choosing not to marry at all. They thus have more real power in the matter than have farm women. Because of their advantageous position, they may scrutinize more critically the qualifications of a prospective husband. The young man of the city in order to win the young woman of his choice is likely to feel a pressure driving him toward personal advancement. It is interesting to conjecture just how much of urban mental and moral development is motivated in the process of competitive striving to win desirable mates.

Marriage on the farms is very largely a family matter. Children of neighboring farmers are likely to pair off at an early age. If the parents in each case are satisfied that it would not be a bad match, they are likely to lend their encouragement to it. In at least many rural communities after a young couple has appeared together in public, it is generally understood that there should be no interference by possible competitors. Thus competition for mates and the driving power toward personal advancement originating in such competition are relatively

lacking on the farms. The farm girl is likely to face the alternative of marriage with some one farmer's son in the community, the only one she has "kept company with," or of picking up and leaving for the city. The farmer's son in question is likely to be pretty largely under parental domination. His father's position in the community rather than his own personal achievement determines his degree of importance. The girl may take him or leave him. Parental and neighborhood opinion, however, is likely to influence her in the direction of the marriage rather than toward a venturing into the uncertainties of an urban existence. In a good proportion of cases the girl never really chooses in the strict sense of the word but merely follows along the path toward marriage with the first neighbor's son who asked her for a "date."

Divorce.—City women, after marriage, are more free to break an unsatisfactory union through divorce than is the case with farm women. In the first place, urban opinion, in general, is less unfavorable to divorce than is rural. Urban-trained women are generally better able to make their own way in case of divorce than would be true of the women on the farms. The farmer's wife is usually poorly prepared, both technically and psychologically, for carrying on an independent existence. Thus she is oftentimes forced to submit to well-nigh unbearable marital conditions, from which legally she might free herself. Fearing both the weight of an adverse community opinion, and the uncertainties of an attempt to maintain a satisfactory sort of living single-handed, she is apt to have very little real choice in the matter. Children, too, render divorce more difficult for the farm wife than for the woman of the same class in the city. She has more of them, and family disruption on the farm results in more serious consequences for children than would usually be the case in the city.

Undoubtedly family dissension which might lead in the direction of divorce is more frequent in urban than in rural communities. Marriage is, of course, always a union of two "selves." Successful marriages are formed by the union of selves sufficiently similar in their likes and dislikes to furnish a basis for congenial living together. Many urban marriages result from the temporary attraction of two individuals who are basically so unlike that an enduring congeniality can only with great difficulty be achieved. Farm young people who marry generally have similar traditions and experiences. They marry at an earlier age than city people of the same class and thus have had less time to develop personal peculiarities. Then, too, after marriage, they spend much more of their time together, which affords less opportunity for distracting suggestions. They are engaged in a common economic task which claims so much attention of both husband and wife that personal incompatibilities are not afforded the opportunity to take on the importance that they might otherwise assume.

The assumption, however, which is frequently made, that family life on the farms is in general more wholesome than that of the towns simply because divorce is less prevalent there is not well founded. In an ideal society all marriages would be of such a nature that there would be no occasion for divorce. American society, however, is far from ideal. Many unwise marriages occur in both city and country and divorce may not always be the most unfortunate sequel to a bad marriage.

Those writers who are contrasting urban and rural marital conditions should not forget the great majority of urban marriages which do not result in separation. In these days of easy urban divorce, those husbands and wives in the cities who live out their days in happy comradeship together should be given credit for constructive achievement decidedly worth consideration. Tradition and the force of external circumstances tend to hold the farm family together in spite of whatever antagonistic feelings may develop between husband and wife. The enduring urban mating, upon the other hand, is likely to depend on the character qualities of the individuals concerned which are sufficient to counteract the influence of distracting suggestions in a complex environment.

Motherhood.—Continuing our contrast of rural and urban women from the standpoint of extent of personal freedom, it must be noted that women of the cities are more free in the matter of motherhood. Knowledge of birth-control methods and sanction of their use are without doubt less general on the farms than with the corresponding urban groups. The farm wife is also further restricted, owing to the fact that children are needed to make the family industry a success. The bearing of sons is a part of the farm woman's economic function. In fact, child bearing is so vital a part of family-farm life that it is probably the case that most farm women accept it as unquestioningly as they do all of the rest of the traditional farm routine.

The woman in town is free to take a more completely human attitude in regard to motherhood. The child of urban parents is an economic liability rather than an asset as in the case of farm children. The pleasure and satisfaction to be derived from the bearing and rearing of children are naturally enough balanced against others of life's possible pleasures and satisfactions. With increasing knowledge of birth-control methods, the urban woman is in a better and better position to determine whether or not she shall have children and, if so, how many. There seems to be little reason to believe that voluntary parenthood will result in too few children to perpetuate the race. It would also seem that any race ought to fail of perpetuation whose women valued competing satisfactions of life more than they cared for children.

Care of Children.—The urban woman is in a better position than the woman of the farm to determine not only whether or not she shall have children but also the nature of the surroundings of such children as she

may have. Here, as elsewhere in the family-farm scheme of life, the nature of the institution limits greatly the free play of personality of both mother and child. The nature of the industry and the comparative isolation of the farm home give the mother little opportunity not to be in the company of her children; they also give her little opportunity to make her contacts with the children other than merely superficial and materialistic in character. As Galpin remarks, "Overfatigue . . . fastened upon the housewife, like character upon the face, is the persistent foe of the spirit in rural life."[1]

The middle-class city mother may determine the nature of the home life of her children. Ignorance or carelessness or lack of capacity upon her part, it is true, may make the home a failure. It is just as true, however, that, if the mother be endowed with characteristics opposite to these she may furnish her children with an efficient home life. She has a large measure of choice in determining the means. She becomes an intelligent administrator of an important undertaking, seeking out the most effective methods of accomplishing the result desired.

She may choose to be in almost constant association with her very young children or she may prefer to delegate much of their personal care to others, taking upon herself a role largely supervisory in character. She may choose whether or not she will place the children in a nursery school. She may exercise an important influence in determining their play associates. She may determine in large measure the nature and the amount of work which the child is to be required to do. In short, the urban child in a good home is the fortunate recipient of very real personal supervision. There is as between mother and child a relatively free contact of mind upon mind, the mind of the mother exercising a leadership function in accordance with its own nature.

Just what proportion of farm wives in America are in the position of the woman who writes, "We can't afford to hire a man, and my husband has to have someone to help him in the field. I don't like to neglect my house and my children, but there is no choice"?[2] In 1919, according to a survey made by the U. S. Department of Agriculture of about 10,000 farm homes located in 33 Northern and Western states, 24 per cent of the wives helped in the fields. Some of these wives undoubtedly had no children. Others who had children would feel, either correctly or not, that their children were not being adversely affected because of the field work. Others would experience, as does the woman quoted above, a sense of conflict between their duty to their children and that to the family industrial unit, in which the industrial demands must prevail. In addition to the fairly large number of women

[1] Galpin, C. J., *Rural Life*, Century Company, New York, 1918.

[2] Lundquist, G. A., "What Farm Women Are Thinking," *Special Bulletin* 71 University of Minnesota, Agricultural Extension Division, May, 1923.

who must work in the fields, there is a still more numerous group whose labors are confined to the house and the garden, and yet whose working hours are long—possibly as long on the average as are those of the field workers—and whose children may suffer as greatly from the situation thus brought about. The women of the family-farms must for the sake of the very existence of the industry be considered first of all as laborers, and they must so consider themselves, and only secondarily as mothers of their children. The children in countless farm homes must suffer in consequence of this fact. Statements such as the following taken from a student's paper are not at all unusual:

> One of my cousins, a very capable girl, married a fairly able farmer, a young German. He is a kind husband but is struggling to pay off a mortgage. She works indoors and out. She has lost hold, until her house is as untidy and dirty as any slum home. She has two fine little boys, who are growing up in this atmosphere of drudgery. I do not know whether she will ever recover the ambitions of her early life.

It perhaps cannot be too frequently stated that the essential limitations in the family-farm scheme of life are not those of poverty. The women's opportunity for choice in regard to their own activities and to the upbringing of their children may quite possibly be as seriously limited on the more prosperous farms as on the less. Anna Garland Spencer eems correctly to present the case when she says,

> The larger the farm, the more property it represents, the more men laborers it demands for the owner's successful conduct of the business, the more unbearable the pressure upon health, strength, time, and energy of the woman who is the farmer's helpmate.[1]

The fact that the limitations of the farm home are mainly due to the nature of the industry is well illustrated in the remark of a farm wife. Her husband with the help of wife and young children had been more successful than most family-farm operators in his vicinity. He had just been appointed to the managership of a fairly large farm at a salary very little if any larger than his former income had been. His wife's first remark upon learning of the change was, "Good! Now the children may take music lessons." Whether or not the children had displayed any musical aptitude worthy of development is beside the point, just as also is the question whether or not the children desired to take lessons. The essential fact is that this one woman, the wife of a prosperous farmer, experienced a sense of relief in passing from the family-unit system to that in which the husband is the family breadwinner. For her, it meant, first of all, an opportunity to choose a path of cultural

[1] SPENCER, ANNA GARLAND, *The Family and Its Members*, p. 259, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1923.

development for her children, free from the institutional restrictions of the family industrial system. While still living in the open country, with the husband still engaged in the occupation of agriculture in which he had developed more than usual proficiency, the family made essentially the same change which great numbers of families are continually making who move from farm to town in order to afford the children bettered opportunities for development.

Personal and Occupational Relationships.—Apart from the woman's function as mother of her children, there are also her responsibilities to herself as an individual member of society. As to these, the middle-class urban woman has a more complete freedom than is the case with the woman of the family-farm. The farmer's wife is, herself, a farmer. Her work is fairly definitely mapped out for her. In agreeing to marry a certain farmer, she, in general, at least tacitly agrees to fit herself into a certain program of life which is determined in part by occupational traditions in the specific local community, and in part by the precise nature of her husband's situation. Her relationship to her husband is often spoken of as one of partnership, and in a sense the word is well chosen. Husband and wife are engaged upon a common task, the task of agricultural production on some certain farm. They together carry the occupational burdens, which rest fully as heavily upon the shoulders of the wife as upon those of the husband. Traditionally, however, the husband is the directing head, the manager of the undertaking. Traditionally, too, his work is more completely standardized than is that of his wife. He ploughs and harrows and sows and reaps and carries the produce to market. The wife's operations begin in the house with the cooking and sewing and cleaning but extend themselves out from the house, or at least beyond the range of the peculiarly household tasks, to supplement the industrial work of the husband. These supplementary operations may take her to the garden, the woodpile, the poultry yard, the stables, the fields, and possibly to town on loads of produce to assist with the marketing. Her job, in short, is to fit herself into the family occupation wherever she can be of greatest aid to her husband in the work of producing and marketing farm products.

In America, the actual status of the farm wife varies all of the way from that of abject slavery to a dominating male up to a position of very real partnership or comradeship with her husband, in which together the two make the plans, divide the labor upon some mutually agreeable basis, and equally share in the decisions regarding the uses to which the money received from the sales should be put. Commonly her status is somewhere between these two extremes, the husband making the major occupational decisions and expecting her ready cooperation in carrying out the plans. The money which is received from the joint efforts of husband and wife is usually the husband's to dispose of as he sees fit.

The wife usually cares for the house much as she pleases, and she is able to experience a certain degree of freedom in its management. The industry, however, under the direction of the husband, is necessarily the prevailing family interest and is likely to obtrude itself into the home in all sorts of ways. The house may become a storage place for various farm implements and utensils; men may be suddenly hired and quartered in the home; the wife's time which she has planned to devote to extra household tasks may be abruptly demanded for work in the industry, either indoors or out; money which the wife may feel should be used for home decorations or new furniture or kitchen equipment may be, upon the husband's decision, spent upon the industry instead. In many cases, the wife is said to have some money for herself, perhaps the income derived from the sale of butter or eggs, or flowers—something which has been her special care. In a large proportion of such cases, however, the wife's money is nearly all used for family necessities. She may derive a considerable satisfaction, without doubt, from handling the money she has received from so-called "private sources," paying it out for such groceries and other household supplies and clothing for herself as she may choose. One must admit, however, that the extent of wifely freedom thus experienced is not great.

It is so completely against farm *mores* for wives to have money of their own, which they may use for other than necessities, that large numbers of them hide what surplus they are able to save, by careful planning, from such transactions as those mentioned above, putting away a few cents at a time in teapots or bureau drawers, gradually accumulating an amount sufficient to pay for some desired but unneeded thing.

It is not to be understood that in general the farm wife's freedom is limited in the various ways indicated above through the husband's selfish whim. It is due to the very nature of the occupational institution which demands subservience of both husband and wife. If the husband tends to dominate, he is doing this very largely simply as the representative of the institution. In general, there is no great difference of opinion on such matters between husband and wife. The wife takes her restricted place in the traditional scheme of things very largely for granted. It is in the farm *mores* that she should do so.

Many farm women live a little part of life outside of their family circle. Church organizations, literary clubs, and other like agencies afford them opportunity for functioning somewhat as individuals rather than as merely members of a family. In these groups they may experience the satisfaction of self-expression and gain the consciousness that they as individuals are counting for something in the complicated web of life. Even here the family occupational interests may break through at any time and usurp the time and energy of the farm wife. She is first and foremost the servant of an institution. In the very nature of

the case, this implies limited opportunity for individual living, and a narrowed life in consequence.

Middle-class non-farm women are more and more freeing themselves from such family restrictions as those which are necessarily the lot of the usual farm wife in our prevailing agricultural system. The husband's income in the middle class is sufficient to meet the family's needs. The wife is thus left a large measure of choice in deciding what use to make of her time. She may choose most unwisely, and enough urban women do so to furnish some basis in fact for much that is said and written of the idleness, the foolish frivolity, the worse than wasted time of the city women of today. Any sweeping statements, however, of the nature indicated are just as unfair as are most generalizations. Urban *mores* are more and more often affording the women the right to choose. If some choose unwisely, it is just as true that others choose well. Different sorts of individual natures are expressing themselves in a great variety of ways.

A very large number, from choice, devote most of their attention to their homes, the term being used in the narrower sense. These women enjoy the details of housekeeping, many of them taking an artistic delight in their domestic achievements. They have the opportunity to express themselves pretty completely in this work, unhindered by such occupational interruptions as normally fall to the lot of the farm woman.

Others whose home life, considered broadly, may be not at all inferior to that of the first group, busy themselves along other lines in accordance with their individual natures. They may spend a minimum amount of time with household details and devote themselves to some one, or possibly to several, of the larger interests of a religious, philanthropic, educational, political, or other nature.

Still other urban wives and mothers are engaged vocationally in various callings. Some are working outside the home part time, while others give practically all of their working time and energy to some chosen career other than that of housekeeping. Some are so engaged, primarily, to increase the family income. Others are not primarily interested in the pay envelope but enjoy a sense of achievement in the thing that they are doing. They wish to be busy in some chosen field, and the field they have chosen does not chance to be housework. In certain of such cases, the home apparently suffers in consequence. In other cases, it does not. Whether or not the home is injured by the choices which these women make, the significant matter is that they increasingly are afforded the opportunity to choose. Further, where women are afforded the chance to choose, their natures are diverse enough to carry them individually into a wide variety of personal adjustments to the larger social order.

Even among the poor, where the labor of both husband and wife is needed to pay the family expenses, there apparently is an increasing opportunity for choice upon the part of the wife. She, as an individual, is coming more and more clearly into view. Her special nature is increasingly taken into account in the matter of employment. As compared with the wives of farmers of the owner class, she occupies a lower place in the scale of economic rating. Her home and her children may show in various ways the handicapping influences of poverty. Even so there is at least the possibility that she as an individual is living a life as richly satisfying as are a large proportion of the wives of fairly well-to-do farmers.

Conclusion

One could hardly have read thus far in the present chapter without asking the question, The lot of which woman is to be preferred? Individual readers will answer the question in accordance with whatever scales of value they have been led to develop for themselves. The issue lies between family solidarity with its resultant limitation of individual freedom, upon the one hand, and varying degrees of individual independence accompanied by a less rigid family organization, upon the other. If one considers happiness or contentment the goal of life, there may be little choice. Human nature is such that most individuals adjust themselves quite contentedly to whatever type of life they find themselves a part of. The readers of this chapter are largely thinking in terms of the satisfactions they have met in their own experience, and they will tend to answer the question accordingly.

One function of social science, thus of rural sociology as one division of the social sciences, is to free the student, as far as possible, from the limitations of his own immediate experience, aiding him to view the social order from an unprejudiced and impartial vantage ground. The rural sociologist and the student of rural sociology become less than scientific in their attitude when they allow themselves to take sides in a rural *versus* urban controversy in the same spirit of emotional enthusiasm in which they would attempt to cheer the home team to victory. The scientist, as such, is a humble, open-minded truth seeker, rather than a valiant fighter for a cause.

At least a part of the truth of the present matter would seem to be correctly stated in the following series of numbered propositions:

1. The great body of farm wives, at least of the owner class, do not differ greatly in racial stock or inherent capacity from the urban women of middle- and upper-class status.

2. In an overwhelming majority of cases, both rural and urban women are living in country and city, respectively, through no real choice of their own and through the operation of no principle of rational selection.

3. By the time these women have reached middle age, a large proportion are so completely adjusted to the life about them that it seems to them to be the *normal* sort of existence, a condition which they would not think of exchanging for the other. The urban wife, when she considers it at all, is likely to view with indiscriminate pity the lot of farm women; while the latter are apt to speak with just as undiscriminating contempt of "city loafers."

4. If, through a miraculous shift of population brought about in the early childhood of these women, they with their parents had been transferred from farm to city, or *vice versa*, and all of them had been socially transplanted with such a changing of traditions as would have been involved, there is no reason to suppose that the social landscape would have been greatly altered thereby.

5. When one considers the lives of some of America's noted women, some of whom are married, others of whom are not, one cannot but be glad that they in their youth were granted the opportunity of development under such conditions of freedom as to afford them the possibility of bringing to expression the gifts which have brought them national and, in some cases, world eminence. One is also glad that those of this group who are married are experiencing a type of family organization so flexible as not to interfere with individual achievement of notable proportions. They are serving all society, both urban and rural, with their contributions in such fields as art, education, religion, and social reform. In every urban center, there are women who though of lesser fame are just as truly profiting, both for themselves and for the community, because of their opportunity to have developed under conditions relatively free, also because their family life after marriage has afforded them sufficient scope for individual living of a positive sort. It goes almost without saying that most of these women were not farm born, also that very few of those who were born on farms remained in the country long enough to marry there. The degree of family solidarity characteristic of our prevailing agricultural system does not contribute at all naturally to the development of individual distinction in either men or women who are products of the system.

6. Other urban women have used their freedom badly. They apparently have received no discipline from any source. They are products, many of them, of a lax family life. If they are married and have children, laxity characterizes the family organization for which they are so largely responsible. Outside their homes, as well as within them, their social contribution is largely negative. Their existence is almost entirely parasitic. Such women would quite surely pay their way on the farms. Many of them are physically sturdy enough to stand without ill effect the 13-hour day of manual labor which is the lot of the average farm wife. If they had been reared under the discipline

of the farm system and were under the sway of its traditions, they would be in a position to serve society infinitely better than they are now doing, not only with their physical efforts in the elemental task of food production but in such use of their higher faculties as might be called into play in the rearing of their children and in constructive effort toward community betterment.

7. Acquaintance with any considerable number of farm wives, or with their husbands, must inspire in the mind of any impartial and thoughtful observer varying degrees of resentment at the restrictions which so greatly handicap some of the more inherently capable individuals among them. Groves remarks of rural community life, "The few that direct public interests are small men and women, trivial in their interests."[1] To the extent that such is the case, the fault undoubtedly lies mainly in dwarfed development and narrowed vision due to the limitations imposed by the family-farm system. Many of these small leaders, as far as one may discern, are by nature capable of significant accomplishment. Many are apparently achieving almost the impossible, when one considers the handicaps under which they strive. What might they not have done for themselves, and for the others whom they would serve, if the conditions of their development had been such as to bring more completely into play the individual natures with which they were originally endowed!

8. The family-farm system, with whatever it means in terms both of beneficial discipline and of narrowed opportunity, is continuing to the present time because of a certain very real combination of social and economic facts. It will so continue in the future until the causative factors have been so altered as to force into existence a new social arrangement for those who are to do the nation's farming. Whether to be glad or sorry for the continued existence of the prevailing system is a question upon which there can be no general agreement. It must be obvious that, were the system to change suddenly into one which afforded the individual as liberal a scope for development and self-expression as does the urban life of today, the essential differences between farming people and others would thereby vanish. This transformation would affect most notably the family life and the careers of women who are so closely identified with that life. For some of the women affected, the change would mean a great new freedom which they could use with varying degrees of profit to themselves and others. To others it would mean a demoralization as great as that which characterizes some urban women of the present time.

[1] Groves, Ernest R., *The Rural Mind and Social Welfare*, p. 38, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1922.

CHAPTER XII

THE RURAL COMMUNITY

This chapter may possibly be opened in no better way than by quoting Professor Gillette's definition of the rural community:

> By a rural community is meant a population of low density inhabiting a wide area and having a consciousness of kind based on common interests and modes of living and working; whose members communicate and cooperate on the basis of one or more interests housed in a center or centers; whose chief industry is agricultural extraction, whose social organizations and reactions are relatively few and simple and are correspondingly modified by spacial separation and mode of production, and whose chief social dependence and resort is the family.[1]

The Distinction between Community and Neighborhood

The difference should be clearly noted between the rural community and the rural neighborhood. The latter is a primary group composed of a number of farm families who think of themselves as neighbors. There are fairly frequent face-to-face contacts among the members of the group. They are not unified through purposive organization but rather through the process of a relatively spontaneous neighboring. Special names are likely to be given to the geographic areas inhabited by neighboring families.

Several interesting studies have been made of these small rural locality groups, covering the origins of their names. The first of such studies was made in 1920, in Dane County, Wisconsin, by J. H. Kolb.[2] He found in this county 121 separate groups of farming people located within definite geographic areas which were designated by locality names. These names originated in various sources, as shown on page 231.

A study made seven years later (1927) by J. H. Kolb and A. P. Wileden indicated that the old neighborhood lines are breaking down and that new interest groups are being formed to take the place of the former geographic units.[3] Just such a change could have well been

[1] Gillette, John M., *Rural Sociology*, p. 548, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1928.

[2] Kolb, J. H., "Rural Primary Groups," *Research Bulletin* 51, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Wisconsin, 1921.

[3] Kolb, J. H., and A. F. Wileden, "Special Interest Groups in Rural Society," *Research Bulletin* 84, Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin, December, 1927.

anticipated on the basis of sound social theory. When means of communication are very poor, families will draw closely together for companionship. A more or less intense sense of unity will develop because of the intimate association. When the means of communication are greatly improved, making it relatively easy for individuals and families to have frequent contact with those who live at a distance, grouping thereupon becomes to a greater extent selective in character. Physical nearness comes to mean less and less, while similarity of purposes and ideals as formed in the increasingly complex social order brought into being through improved communication comes to mean more and more.

Source of name	Number
Accident	6
Economic institution	1
Educational institution	3
Family name	32
Former resident	8
Nationality	8
Natural phenomena	39
Post office	4
Social institution	5
Township	15
Total	121

The neighborhood as a geographic unit ceases to be when families generally are no longer on intimate terms with those who live on adjoining farms. If the closest friends of a family are scattered about over an area several miles in diameter and if every family has such a group of friends, the neighborhood function may possibly be carried out as well or even better than before; it simply has ceased to be possible to describe the neighborhood in geographical terms. Old neighborhood names may remain and serve a useful purpose as designations of geographic localities long after they have ceased to represent any greater social solidarity than characterizes the dwellers in an urban apartment house.

The community, as distinguished from the neighborhood, is characterized by cooperation "on the basis of one or more interests housed in a center or centers." The neighborhood grouping is relatively spontaneous, while that of the community is purposive. Churches, schools, and other social institutions are organized to serve certain specialized human needs. Experience seems to indicate that in general a person's religious needs may be most effectively met through the cooperative effort of a fairly large group of individuals all of whom are conscious of having similar needs. When such a group does organize itself and establishes a church, the group may be spoken of as a church community. Likewise, there is the school community. Other interests are represented by institutions such as banks, stores, libraries, weekly papers, and farm

clubs, each of which is made possible by cooperation of a considerable number of individuals or families. Each of these interests is housed in some center, increasingly some common point, a hamlet or village, which the farm families inhabiting a considerable area think of as their town. They do most of their buying there; the high school is located there and possibly a consolidated school which has been made possible through the doing away with the small district schools in that vicinity; the local paper is printed there; the Grange Hall and the church, or churches, are there; facilities for recreation are to be found there. It is the community center.

In many cases, these separate institutions exist as independent and more or less antagonistic entities, housed in close proximity to one another as a matter of convenience but conscious of no vital common interest. In others, a strong community consciousness prevails which finds expression in a community council representative of the various specialized interests and, possibly, also in some type of community house which is arranged in such a manner that it may adequately serve as a central gathering place for all of the people who are members of the larger community.

Influence of Scattered Farm Residences

Had the English rural village community become the prevailing type in America, rural life would be in certain ways very different from what it now is. In that case, through living in compact groups, a sense of social solidarity would quite naturally have become traditional. Each individual born in such a community would think of himself as being born into a certain community as truly as into a certain family. All residents of the village area would tend to be very real members of the community.

In America, farmers' children are for the most part born in isolated farmhouses. The family comes readily into their view. They may live out their lives, however, without ever in any real sense feeling themselves to be parts of a community. The family may enter very largely, or practically not at all, into some sort of community relationship. It may live almost entirely a little life of its own, making only such outside contacts as will serve the most elementary of human needs. Some little trading must be done at the village store, and the law compels a certain amount of school attendance upon the part of the children.

A compact living in village groups may be thought of as a natural development. Primitive agriculturalists in every known case live in such groups, and modern farmers, excepting those of the United States, with practical universality continue in this regard the age-old traditions established by their primitive forebears. The isolated American farmhouse came into existence mainly because of the manner which the national government hit upon for the disposal of its lands. Early in our national history, settlement upon a tract of land was allowed to pave the

way for its purchase by the settler, and this naturally furnished an incentive toward the building of scattered farm homes. Later, the Homestead Act very definitely provided that individuals who wished to obtain land under its provisions must live upon the land to be obtained for a period of five years. Thereupon, owing indirectly to governmental enactment, the isolated farmhouse became a very real American institution.

Our system of scattered farm homes has certain advantages. One of the more obvious of these is the fact that under this system much less time is needed by the farmer to get from his home to his work, and back again. This, without doubt, is an economic advantage, which may or may not be counterbalanced by a very real cultural loss. Living near their work, and correspondingly far from their community center, families are in danger of overstressing the economic aspects of life. The home itself tends to become a part of the industrial equipment rather than a place of retirement from the cares of the work-a-day world. All members of the family tend to be caught in the industrial system, in part because of the fact that they reside in such close proximity to the scene of never-ending farm labor.

From the standpoint of family solidarity, the relative isolation of the farm home is an advantage. Since contacts with those outside the family are impeded to some extent through the fact of physical distance, the individual members of the family are thrown back upon the home group for such social stimulation as they are to receive. From the standpoint, however, of a vital community life, the scattered farm dwellings furnish a discouraging basis. Added to the difficulty of regular and frequent association because of the distances to be traveled from their homes is the fact of the existence of traditions of individualism, or, more accurately, of familism, which owe their origin and continuance in large part to the fact that farmer ancestors for generations have lived and thought in relative isolation.

Some Essentials of an Ideal Rural Community

While students of the rural situation disagree in regard to details concerning the most desirable type of rural community, it would seem to be possible to sketch in rather broad outline certain characteristics which would meet the approval of all thoughtful persons.

In the first place, such a community would furnish every resident with material suited to his peculiar nature, of such a sort that he would be enabled to live there a richly satisfying life. His specialized needs of every kind—religious, educational, cultural, recreational—would be met. In the second place, every individual in this ideal community would be actively engaged in some capacity in the common task of community betterment. The most capable individuals would be in positions

of leadership. Others of lesser ability would be filling posts suited to their individual capacities. In such a community, there would be a sufficient number of leaders to fill the more important places without overloading certain individuals with responsibilities, as is so frequently done. In the third place, there would be such a general and vigorous loyalty to the whole that conflict between rival groups within the community would assume a wholly subordinate significance and thus become constructive instead of wasteful, as it so often is in the actual communities of our experience.

In the writer's opinion—and this is admittedly a debatable matter—the ideal rural community would exist in as complete touch with the best in our urban life as would be practicable. However fine the rural community may in itself become, it can properly exist only as a means to an end; and this end would be the perfecting of the contacts between its individual members and the best of the world outside its own limits. Much that is finest in the world of today is to be found in the life of the cities. However well the rural community may serve itself from its own resources, it will still be true that the cities will have much richness to offer in the service of human needs. The leaders of our ideal rural community will be sympathetically sensitive as regards valuable life contributions from any source, either rural or urban, and they will consider it a part of their function to carry to those whom they are leading as complete a knowledge as possible of these good things.

Antagonism between country and city is more or less general, especially upon the part of the former. There are very good reasons in the nature of things why this should be the case. Wise social leadership will contend against this attitude. The leaders in our ideal rural community will not be country-minded, if this term is to be understood as implying an unsympathetic or hostile attitude toward the city. Human life, at least in these modern days, should be a larger experience than can be described at all adequately by such terms as rural and urban. That farmers should have their own peculiar point of view industrially, just as have capital and labor, is obviously a fact. That they should organize occupationally in the attempt to gain for themselves what they may consider to be their proper share of the national income is just as obviously the reasonable thing to do. If the agricultural part of our population, however, allows its competitive attitude against other classes to extend beyond the industrial aspects of life into its various other phases, it is pursuing a policy most wasteful in character. The great values of life are neither rural nor urban. Truly great men have drawn the material for their greatness from both country and city. Our ideal rural community must exist as a vital part of the larger society, in the midst of a wide stream of ideas flowing constantly in from all the various regions in which ideas originate.

The opposing view, which at least in the past has tended to prevail and which at the present time is not without its vigorous proponents, is based on the belief that country people and city people are fundamentally unlike. It is held that agriculture, in addition to being an occupation, is and should remain a mode of life. It is felt to be desirable to stress certain so-called "distinctively rural" values. A permanent and specialized rural leadership is advocated to be made up of men and women who love the country more than they do the city and who, because of their leadership qualities, may develop and maintain among country people the same sort of emotional bias which they themselves possess. Such expressions as "rural culture" and "rural civilization" are used to carry out this idea of a fundamental separation of interests and ideals between those of the cities and those of the farms.

According to this way of thinking, the ideal rural community would exist very definitely and deliberately in opposition to city influences. It would successfully resist any tendency towards its "urbanization." It would have a life as fine as, or finer than, that which the cities could afford, but one which was essentially different from the latter. The skilled leaders in this ideal rural community would work successfully with the young people. While doing nothing which would seem in any direct way to limit any young person's occupational or other choices, they would so skilfully manipulate the conditions of choice for the youth of the community that the latter would in sufficient numbers "naturally" choose to remain on the farms. The community would be self-perpetuating, and enough of the brighter boys and girls would remain in the industry and in the community to maintain or possibly even to raise the eugenic values of the local population.

No one in this day would advocate a complete isolation of the rural community from urban ideas. It is maintained simply that ideas from urban sources should be carefully watched and sorted and interpreted in such a way by community leadership that rural morale, as such, may not be undermined. The following three quotations, taken from a most interesting book, *The Rural Mind and Social Welfare* by Prof. E. R. Groves, well illustrate the position held by certain writers who maintain the desirability of a condition of deliberately modified rural-urban contacts.

In the first place, a statement implying the belief that thoroughgoing separation of the rural community from outside influences is undesirable: "If living in the country comes to mean merely thinking in neighborhood terms, we can populate the country districts only by creating a dull American peasant class."[1]

The second statement to be presented indicates a certain fear of outside influences, which apparently are thought of as somewhat neces-

[1] GROVES, ERNEST R., *The Rural Mind and Social Welfare*, p. 65, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1922.

sary evils. "Education in all its forms is ever in danger (*sic*) in the country of giving the growing boy and girl urban ambitions and urban ideals."[1]

Finally, is presented a quotation embodying a bit of advice to rural community leaders, suggesting one means of aiding in the control of the conditions of choice of farm young people. The author has been discussing the value of prize contests for country boys and girls and has mentioned what he considers to be some of their dangers. He continues,

> It is equally true that when the boy or girl who wins the prize in the agricultural contest is given an unreasonable amount of publicity and greatly flattered, he may become so captivated by the pleasures of social distinction that soon he will find the country environment intolerable because such a tremendous degree of self-assertion has been evoked. By the contest he has been educated in competitive effort for its own sake and sooner or later he will naturally drift out of the country into the urban environment where he can exercise to the full the aggressive impulses that have been formed. Safety (*sic*) consists in putting the emphasis upon the activity itself.[2]

Without entering at this point into a discussion of the relative merits of these two opposing views concerning proper rural-urban relationships, one may continue on less debatable ground regarding the characteristics of the actual rural community as contrasted with what may be taken to be the essentials of an ideal community.

Reasons for Low Efficiency of Rural Community Life

Every individual who lives within a community's geographical area should be actively engaged, at least to some extent, in contributing what he has in him to contribute towards the enhancement of the social life of the group. The individuals in any community differ greatly in capacity for achievement. They differ also in direction of interest. No two of them are alike. The very fact that each individual is unique renders it all the more important that he should be "in the picture" of community activity. For him to fail to do his part subtracts from the completeness of the effect to be desired just as truly as would be the case with an orchestra, should one of the musicians simply sit in his place with instrument in hand and never play a note.

There are usually to be found in any community to be considered many such "silent" members. The inactivity of these individuals must be accounted for in large part by their failure to realize that there is a community. There is a great lack of community consciousness. The family tends to reign supreme, owing not only to the physical separation of farm homes but also in large part to the predominance of the family

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 57.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 78.

industrial unit. The family lives and works and thinks together. It is obliged to obtain some of the necessities of its existence from outside its own circle. It is apt, however, to expect to get these things in just the same way as it trades at the corner store, getting as much as it can for as little as it is necessary to pay. In such cases, there is no real identification of the self with the larger group. The family has monopolized such enthusiasm as the individual may possess, and his spirit is thus narrowed to its limits.

Excessive family interest of the same narrow type sometimes manifests itself in rural communities in a great deal of social activity which is apparently undertaken from the motive of family rivalry. The larger society of the community becomes the arena of family display, which may incidentally accomplish much in the way of community betterment, even though the impression is given that family prestige rather than community advancement is the real end sought. Not infrequently, family feuds, of the same general nature as those of the Kentucky mountains and lacking only the more extreme manifestations, absorb the attention of a community group with little positive achievement resulting therefrom.

In every community, there are certain individuals whose main deterrent from entering into community activity in some helpful way is their long hours of labor which leave them little animation of spirit after the day's work is done. Farm wives who are inherently capable and naturally inclined toward various types of community service are frequently kept from that service only because their whole energy is demanded by the family occupation.

Finally, there remain the great group of the incapables. Retired farmers and others who have plenty of time on their hands and who may be possessed of good enough capacity and a friendly attitude toward community advancement are in many cases actually incapable, as far as one can see, of doing anything in the nature of community activity other than paying something toward the expense. While they were young and in the plastic stage, such talents as they may have had, other than the purely occupational, failed of development. Now, psychologically at least, they are fitted only for mob scenes in the drama of community life.

Lack of Efficient Leadership.—Rural communities generally suffer from a dearth of efficient leadership. Undoubtedly enough individuals of sufficient capacity and of wide enough variety of types are born in the usual community to keep it supplied with a full quota of capable leaders for its various activities. A large proportion of those who are inherently capable fail of a proper sort of development. Those who do come to the front and temporarily occupy positions of importance in the community life are among those most likely to leave for the city. Their going

may be of advantage to themselves and to the larger society, while at the same time it may be working great temporary injury to the local rural community. The recurring withdrawal of the more capable individuals from rural community life not only is of consequence in that it represents an actual loss to that community of developed leadership; it also is important in its psychological effects.

Unless one has experienced it oneself, it is difficult to conceive of the depression which recurrently affects the more sensitive people in a community upon the departure of the leaders. The president of a young people's religious organization, the star pitcher of the baseball team, the solo cornetist of the village band, the leading soprano of the church choir—ambitious capable young people upon whom so much apparently depends—these seem to be the ones most likely to go and, through their going, greatly to weaken the efficiency of the organizations in which they served. Not infrequently so much has apparently been dependent upon the one who is leaving that the organization disbands upon his departure. If the posts are filled, it may be done from the ranks of the older, less efficient persons who may serve for many years, altogether too many in fact to suit the peace of mind of community well-wishers. Or, again, the choice may fall upon untried young persons who in this way gain for themselves experience, which may be only preparing them for their successful flight from the rural community to an urban. Members of the community are apt to feel that everything in the way of talent and ability is going out while nothing is coming in. The attitude of hopelessness which may naturally enough result from such a feeling may accentuate the very conditions upon which it is dependent. The community is likely to look backward to the "good old days" before so-and-so died or left for the city and to be more or less hesitant about backing with any enthusiasm the efforts of ambitious young people who are trying to carry on in the present.

Urban communities are typically dominated by a spirit of optimism. The situation is naturally complementary to that which has just been described. Whatever present conditions may be with them, the future, in general, looks brighter. There is a constant flow of partially developed talent in their direction, and the impetus derived from the pressure of inflowing ability stimulates the development of individuals possessing leadership qualities who are born in the cities. As illustrative of a situation as far removed as possible from that of the farm community may be mentioned that of a thriving college or university. Here each of the annual incoming groups of students may, in general, be supposed to be fully as able as those of past years. Constant improvement in the methods of training newcomers for positions of service in the college community may be generally assumed. Therefore, whatever may be the achievements in musical or literary or forensic or dramatic or athletic

lines of endeavor in the present, it is felt that next year is bound to show an improvement. Whether or not such improvement actually occurs, the expectation of it is usually present, and the whole community experiences a thrill of anticipation which goes a long way towards making life an exhilarating venture. Of course, the urban community may be thought of as lying somewhere between these two extremes of optimism in the college community and depression in the continuously drained rural community.

Not only does the rural community suffer from the inferior leadership of immature individuals whose worth is unproved and of mature persons whose merit is likely to have been proved to be second rate, owing to defective facilities for finding and training the really capable and to the migration of a large proportion of those who prove themselves to be highly efficient. There is likely to be an overloading of certain individuals with more responsibilities than they can carry well, even in case they are extremely capable. This works a double injury in that it prevents the overworked person from doing himself justice in the post of leadership for which he is best adapted; it also deprives other individuals of the opportunity for development which goes along with the assumption of responsibility. It is not rural communities alone which suffer in this respect. It is apparently a universal tendency to give comparatively few of the more capable and active individuals more than their share of the community load to carry. Colleges sometimes guard against this by limiting by rule the number of offices or important posts which the individual may hold at one time. The effect of this tendency to overload certain individuals is possibly more disastrous in rural communities than elsewhere. In them it may become actually traditional for the members of certain families to hold the places of honor and responsibility, irrespective of whatever ability, either actual or potential, there may be elsewhere in the group.

Communities made up almost exclusively of farm families are perhaps more likely to suffer from deficient leadership than are those whose populations are partly industrial. The fact that farm communities are very largely self-perpetuating has a tendency to make their life run in well-worn channels. Factory workers, with their bosses and executives, are bound to be somewhat migratory—mature men with their families coming into the town to take the places of those who leave it. Some of these incoming individuals may themselves achieve positions of leadership in the community, enriching its life with ideas which have had their origin elsewhere. Then, too, a somewhat changing population has a tendency to disturb alignments that might become overrigid, were the community left to perpetuate itself from its own children.

The writer has in mind a rural community of the sort just indicated. The center of this community is a village of about two thousand popula-

tion, consisting of some hundreds of factory laborers in addition to the handful of professional men, the merchants, and the retired farmers who are to be found in every country village. The farmers of this community have their own occupational organizations such as the Grange, cow testing, breeders, and shipping associations. Other organizations of a religious, cultural, and recreational nature, however, are participated in on equal terms by individuals from all sections of the community, and of every occupation represented. Leadership is not the peculiar function of the members of any occupational group. The leader of the band may be a farmer, a factory hand, a druggist's clerk, or a man of any other occupation. This is true of every other organization in the community whose purpose is not merely occupational advancement.

Many farmers and their wives take no active part in the life of this community. Their social visits to town are limited almost entirely to the Saturday night trip. On these occasions, they do most of their weekly trading and stand about or sit in their cars listening to the band concert while visiting with friends from other parts of the community. Many of them, especially the younger, attend the motion picture show. The failure of these people to participate more completely in the cooperative life of the community is in general not due to a lack of community consciousness. They feel themselves to be eligible for full and active membership in the various organizations housed in that town. If asked, most of them would say that it was the long hours on the farm and the hard work which prevented their participation. Many of them when younger were active members of the various groups centering in the village, and some of them were capable leaders in those groups. Gradually, however, the farm work and life closed in on them. The men shave less frequently and do not fit as well into their "dress-up" clothes as they did when younger; the women, too, take less pains with their personal appearance. Both men and women age more rapidly than do their village associates of earlier days. Their contacts with the village become less and less vital, and more and more of a merely external sort of the Saturday-night type.

A process of selection is at work in this community, carrying into the village the farmers who apparently care most for active participation in the various community organizations. These men either sell or rent their farms and fit themselves occupationally into the village life, where the shorter hours of work give them a greater opportunity for social activity than was formerly theirs. Although the village lacks by several hundreds the population of an urban community, the movement to it from the surrounding farms is essentially a process of very real urban selection. The more socially alert tend to congregate in the town. The industrial life of the village is sufficiently varied to afford a considerable range of occupational opportunity to those who come in from the farms.

There is apparent no marked line of cleavage between the town and its surrounding farms. It is all one community. Leadership in general is held by the town dwellers, simply because of the fact that those of the community who are most capable and willing to exercise the function of leadership reside in the town. The farm dwellers are very real members of the larger community group but, as family-farm life affords relatively little chance for social activity, those who choose that life or who remain in it by force of circumstances are seldom heard from in any conspicuous way in connection with community activities.

The "Rurban" Community

Dr. Galpin speaks of communities such as the one just described as "rurban" communities, implying by the term a union of rural and urban elements in a single community. He says,

> As the word *rurban* is formed by blending *rural* into *urban*, so the idea of rurbanism is that, as the rural population of America is an integral part of the nation, so the open country is an element in the clustered town, and the town is a factor of the land, and the civilization, culture, and development of rural people are to be found in conjunction with town and small city, and not apart.[1]

Whatever name may be applied to a community composed of various occupational elements, including the agricultural, may be relatively unimportant. The essential fact is that in the community described, which does not manifest tendencies that strike one as at all untypical, there is a sharing of a common life. Community consciousness is more highly developed in the case of certain individuals than in that of others, as would be true anywhere, in country or city. Friction between various groups is not lacking. There is, however, no open country *versus* village conflict, as such. There is evident a fairly general realization that there are many common interests which can best be realized through the cooperative effort of all elements residing in that area.

Community Organization

The community, as a community, has its need for organization as truly as has each specialized interest of the larger group. The mechanics of a larger organization are sometimes, even in very good communities, most simple. The essential matter is rather a feeling of oneness than anything in the nature of complicated unifying machinery. If the leaders of each of the separate and specialized groups are able to stress successfully the community point of view, subordinating the interests of the smaller groups to those of the larger, the desired end has been in large measure attained. There is always the danger to be guarded against of groups whose interests and activities should be of a specialized

[1] Galpin, C. J., *Rural Life*, p. 64, Century Company, New York, 1918.

nature and subservient to large community programs attempting to dominate the entire community situation. Such tendencies must be thought of as natural, even inevitable, but there is need, from the standpoint of the well-rounded development of the entire larger group, that those larger interests should be effectively represented by capable, broad-minded, idealistic leadership. In other words, any community is unfortunate that does not number among its more effective members at least a few who care more for the community as such than for any organization within the community. These men and women will be members of various specialized groups, but they will always stand ready to speak for the community as a whole whenever the programs of their small groups seem in danger of running counter to the best interests of the whole community. The friendly good will of these individuals toward, for example, members of religious denominations and fraternal societies, other than those of which they are members, is a most useful cementing agency in the community.

Advanced mechanical forms of community organization are apt to develop on the basis of a spirit of cooperation existing among the more active leaders in community life. If such individuals really desire to work hand in hand with all other forward-looking people in the vicinity for the accomplishment of large community ends, it is natural that they should proceed to the organization of some central group whose function it is to correlate the activities of the various specialized organizations already in existence and to aid in the development of other agencies in case such are needed to represent the complete life of the community in all its various aspects—religious, educational, recreational, and economic.

Unless the community is completely permeated with a spirit of cooperation, the forming of a central group made up of representatives of the various organizations may prove to be of little positive significance. It may prove to be even worse than useless. It will make large demands upon the time and energy of certain conscientious individuals who are possibly already overburdened with community responsibilities. It may accomplish little more than to provide the opportunity for the development of heightened attitudes of friction among the energetically selfish individuals from whom few communities either rural or urban are entirely free. In communities characterized in the main by attitudes of enthusiastic good will, much general benefit may be derived from the maintaining of a central organization of community leaders.

Community Council.—The community-council idea developed quite inevitably in the thinking of some of those who had already progressed as far in their thought as the community idea. If the community, as a community, is as true a social reality as are the various specialized institutions and agencies existing within the physical boundaries of the area usually referred to as the community, then some group should be selected

in a democratic manner to look after community interests as such. For the most part, individuals live more vitally in their communities or in specialized phases of community life than they do in the local political units of which they are residents. One's relation to the village, the township, or the county of which he is a resident is likely to be highly external or perfunctory in character. Officers elected to carry on the governmental functions of these various political units are likely to render perfunctory service of narrowly restricted scope. Constructive service to local human needs is very largely a matter of the nonpolitical and voluntary organizations to which community-spirited individuals attach themselves. The officers of such organizations are chosen because of their leadership ability and, if competent leaders are chosen, they will attract new members to the organizations and in other ways enhance the prestige of the special groups they represent and serve. In order that the community ideal may be most effectively represented in any given locality, some of the most broad-minded leaders should be associated. The community council is the name generally given to such an organized group of leaders.

It is customary for the council to be made up of one or more representatives of each of the special societies or organizations within the community, with two or more additional members chosen to represent the community at large. The council elects officers, holds regular meetings, and carries on discussions intended to lead to community improvement. Efficient teamwork among the various groups represented in the council is striven for, and community needs for which no existing group is carrying responsibility are met in some way. If the representative groups give whole-hearted support to the council and if these groups are well represented in that organization, the community is certain to profit greatly through the plan. In cases in which the cooperative spirit is too weak to support in its entirety the community-council plan, it is sometimes possible partially to arrive at that goal through the organization of councils to represent certain special interests of the community. The churches, for example, may effect a cooperative organization with a council at its head. It should go without saying that any degree of cooperative spirit and effort that succeeds in getting itself manifest among the organizations of a community is, to whatever extent it may go, an advantage to that community.

Organization among Communities

No community can live to itself alone. In the case of certain definite services, most rural communities are too small to maintain for themselves adequate institutional equipment. The reasonable thing to do in such a case is for two or more communities to join hands in a real spirit of cooperation to secure for themselves jointly what each community by

itself would be unable to achieve. Single rural communities are in general too small, for example, to maintain properly equipped hospitals. As rural people obviously should have ready access to hospital facilities, the reasonable procedure is for communities to cooperate in the maintenance of suitable facilities. The outlook is obviously most favorable for successful intercommunity cooperation in those cases where each community has developed a thoroughgoing spirit of cooperation within itself carried to the point of definite organization according to the community-council plan. It is safe to assume that efficient intercommunity teamwork must develop, if at all, upon the basis of a successful working-together of men and women within single communities.

CHAPTER XIII

COMMUNICATION

As was stated in the Introduction, the individual owes his very existence as a human being to the fact of communication. Without communication there could be no society, and man as such has no life apart from society. The level of civilization achieved by any group of people is very largely dependent upon the degree of completeness with which this social group is brought into contact with the lives of other men. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine somewhat in detail certain of the more important instrumentalities of modern communication as they affect America's farming population.

Public Roads

When considering the various agencies of communication as affecting the lives of farming people, one very naturally thinks first of all of the public roads—that is if they are not merely taken for granted because of the fact that roads of some sort have been in existence from the very beginning of settlement on the land. In general, the farmer, wherever he may live, may follow the road which passes his house until he arrives at some town. However crooked it may be, however steep the grades, and however lacking it may be in a smooth and solid surface, the country road connects farm with city and makes possible a commerce in both material goods and ideas which does much in the way of linking together into one society the lives of those affected.

The total mileage of public roads in the United States is somewhat over three million which is, according to Professor Gillette's estimate, about half what it may become, should every square mile of populated land in the country be bounded by roads. Approximately one-quarter of the total miles of roads are covered with a surfacing of some description intended to facilitate travel upon them, the remaining three-quarters being unsurfaced or "dirt" roads. Pavement accounts for approximately one-tenth of the surfaced mileage. The coming of the automobile has been instrumental in bringing about a very greatly increased interest in the improvement of country roads and especially in the linking of city with city by pavement. Every year sees an increase by several thousands of miles of the total mileage of roads which are hard-surfaced.

Highway Systems.—Every unit of our government has interested itself in road building and maintenance. The national government since 1917

has been appropriating large sums of money for use under certain specified conditions by the various states. All of the forty-eight states have shared in the benefits of the federal grants and have certain roads that were constructed through the combined expenditures of state and national money.

The states have their highway systems and a certain number of miles of state roads in addition to those built in the state in part through the use of federal funds. The number of miles of state roads is as yet greatly in excess of the number constructed as federal-aid projects. In certain cases the states cooperate on some mutually agreed basis with the counties in the building of roads, the roads being constructed by counties with the aid of state funds or by the states, with a portion of the cost paid by the counties in which the roads are constructed. In certain other cases, the roads are built entirely by state funds.

As yet but a relatively small portion of the nation's highways have been built and maintained in the ways mentioned above, under federal or state auspices. The remainder are county, township, and local roads, for the most part poorly constructed and maintained; in general, the smaller the constructing unit, the poorer the roads. Most farm homes are located off the main highways, with the road to town being for at least a portion of the way of an inferior sort and in a very large proportion of cases well-nigh impassable for at least a part of the year. Ideally, every farmer would have easy highway access to his town the year around. The nation's progress toward such a goal is possibly as rapid as could reasonably be expected, more than a billion dollars a year being expended by the various road-construction units for the extension of highway systems and for the improvement and maintenance of those roads already in existence. It seems entirely reasonable to improve first those roads which are likely to be used by the greatest number of people who wish to travel over them and to extend this improvement as rapidly as may be done to accommodate smaller groups of the traveling public. The pursuance of this policy, however, is bound to result in most farmers and the residents of many villages being obliged to do a large part of their traveling over roads inferior to those used by residents of the cities.

The present situation might be greatly bettered if all roads not being cared for by the state, with or without federal aid, should be made the responsibility of county organizations. In these days of enlarged communities and increasingly close relationship among communities, the county is as small a unit for road construction and maintenance as should be tolerated. While there is no reason to think that any mathematically laid out political unit is nicely adapted to the purpose of developing the best kind of highway system, as whatever is done must be accomplished through some governmental unit, the larger the unit, in general, the better. The township is far too small in these large-scale

days for the purpose, and a very large share of our roads are still administered by districts of which there may be several in a single township. The county is a large enough unit to afford the expert supervision which is required for the building of good roads. It may also afford the thoroughly modern and somewhat expensive machinery required for the proper building and repair of modern highways. These advantages, in addition to the fact that a county system of roads is quite sure to be arranged for the better convenience of the greatest number of county residents than is the case where smaller-unit administration prevails, should lead to the general adoption of county road administration to the extent that the highways are not the direct responsibility of the state.

Certain Specific Benefits Derived from Good Roads.—1. An improvement of the farmer's road to town virtually shortens the distance of his farm from market. This in turn spells economic advantage to the farmer. Heavier loads may be transported over a modern highway with the same expenditure of motive power than may be carried over muddy or even smooth dry earth roads. With the use of the motor truck, which is facilitated by the development of improved roads, the necessary time taken in traveling to and from the market town is greatly reduced, heavy loads being transported more rapidly than much lighter loads may be drawn over unimproved roads. The shortening of distance to market results in increased value of the farms affected, as would naturally be expected and as certain studies have shown to be the case.

If the farmer's road to market is improved only a portion of the way, the benefit to be derived from road improvement may be greatly lessened. The farmer who is obliged to drive half the distance to town over very poor roads before he reaches the fine highway does not derive as great a benefit from the improved road as one might at first suppose. The size of the load is obviously limited by the poorest section of the road that the farmer is obliged to travel. Half a loaf is undoubtedly better than none but, in this case, it may not be 50 per cent as valuable as a whole loaf.

2. Improved roads facilitate various rural delivery services. Roads of a certain quality are essential for the maintenance of rural mail-delivery routes, and the improvement of roads above the bare minimum demanded for the existence of the routes results in expediting the delivery of mail to farmers and in lengthening the routes so that more farm homes may be served, with no additional personnel or equipment. The extension of modern roads out from the cities naturally leads to a tendency for merchants to extend their delivery services out into the country, providing farm people with an item of convenience formerly available only to city dwellers. Arrangements are also made whereby town and city fire-fighting apparatus may be called to protect farm property situated in fairly close proximity to the town and on an improved highway.

3. One of the more important benefits which the farmer derives from good roads is that they shorten the time needed to secure medical help in case of sudden illness. This is true, of course, whether the sick or injured person is being taken to the physician's office or hospital in town or the doctor is required to travel out to the farm home. It has been estimated that the telephone and the good roads together make possible the securing of a physician in from one-eighth to one-quarter of the time formerly required when it was necessary for the farmer to drive his horses to town over poor roads to notify the doctor, then for the latter to go with horse and buggy over the same poor roads to the farm home.[1] The realization upon the part of the farm family that expert medical service is readily obtainable is likely to be a source of great satisfaction even though in a given family an emergency calling for haste in this regard may seldom or never occur. The stock on the farm is also because of good roads obviously given an added degree of protection through the increased availability of the town veterinary. This may chance to be of considerable economic significance to the farmer.

4. Improved roads tend toward the breaking down of the barriers of neighborhood isolation and toward the development of community consciousness. The enlargement of the rural group thus brought about leads quite naturally in the direction of the consolidation of educational, religious, and other social activities, with consequent added efficiency. Farm children attending a consolidated school may, while in attendance at school, be considerably farther away from home geographically than were the parents who attended the small district school. They may be actually closer to the home farm in point of time. With telephone connections between the farm and the school, and with automobiles and good roads to facilitate transportation, ideas of physical distance have been greatly modified during the past few years in those rural communities to which these modern conveniences have come. Adult activities as well as the school activities of children are undergoing changes of the same general nature as those embodied in the transition from the one-room school to the large consolidated institution.

5. Finally must be mentioned a somewhat less tangible although just as real influence of good roads as the others already pointed out. It consists in the fact that the farmer and his family by the means of improved highways are brought into closer touch with the great outside world than would otherwise be possible. Because of the existence of an immensely better means of transportation—improved roads and automobiles, the use of which is facilitated by a hard and smooth road surface—the farmer is likely to go to town more frequently than formerly, and to visit more distant and larger cities than his parents ever saw.

[1] Taylor, Carl C., *Rural Sociology*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1926.

Then, too, residents of the cities and other rural communities are making constant use of the modern road which passes the farmer's home. Physical association, at least, with greatly increased numbers of people of many types results through the improved means of transportation. The farmer of today whose home is passed by an improved highway is bound to be more keenly conscious of his membership in a larger society than that of his immediate neighborhood than was the case with the country dwellers of a generation ago, or with those of the present time who chance to live in more isolated regions. It obviously does not necessarily follow that this heightened sense of physical membership in the larger society becomes of any especial mental significance in individual cases. The new contacts may remain purely of an external sort. External, physical association, however, does furnish the possibility of increasing contacts between mind and mind and, undoubtedly, bettered means of transportation have been responsible for enlarging and enriching the range of vital human association experienced by many farming people.

The Automobile

At the present time, the automobile is by all means the most important agency of rural communication. It has very largely supplanted the horse-drawn conveyance of the past in most farming regions in America, with perhaps five out of six farm families the country over in possession of some sort of a car. Even as early as 1920, according to a study by H. B. Hawthorne, one of the more rural counties of Iowa had one car for every five persons.[1] During the year, as indicated by this study, the average farm family in the county spent 219 hours on the road and traveled 3,500 miles. Even while the average rate of speed according to these figures was only 16 miles an hour, the distance to town and home again was covered much more rapidly, and very likely somewhat more frequently than was previously the case with horse and carriage.

The most obvious result of the use of cars by farmers is an increase in the number and frequency of physical contacts made possible outside of the home. The old familiar road to town is traveled more frequently than was formerly possible, and other more distant towns and cities are brought within easy reach of the farm family. Country roads that were previously unknown, or but infrequently traveled, in many cases become almost as familiar to the car user as was the one oft-traveled road to the near-by village. A greater variety of natural scenery is made available for many, some of whom in the old days saw nothing but the same familiar fields, trees, and streams, which, though possibly beautiful enough to one unfamiliar with them, had become common to those who saw nothing else. Some farmers, since the coming of the automobile,

[1] Hawthorne, H. B., *The Sociology of Rural Life*, p. 187, Century Company, New York, 1926.

have developed the vacation habit, traveling considerable distances annually for purposes of rest and recreation.

Saturday night in town has become very much a farmer institution. Taylor remarks, "It is now a normal condition on Saturday night at Iowa county seats to find 1,000 automobiles parked for blocks about, and near the town square."[1] The farmers come to town, some of them traveling many miles. They mingle with the throng on the crowded sidewalks; they do their weekly buying in the stores that remain open late on Saturday night for their convenience; they listen to the band concert which is paid for by the merchants to attract a large number of customers to their particular town; they visit with other farmers whom they possibly have not seen since the last Saturday night in town; many attend a motion picture show. They do all of these things, but there is little in these external contacts, increased in number by the automobile, to indicate, as some writers have assumed, that country and town are thereby being drawn to any appreciable extent more closely together.

Some writers have concluded because of the coming of the automobile to the farmer—making it readily possible for those who formerly traveled short distances and slowly now to go greater distances and at a much higher rate of speed—that farmer attitudes have thereby undergone a radical transformation. In the words of one writer, "But for the coming of the cheap car, the farmer would by now be well on his way toward peasant consciousness."[2]

Whatever may be the truth regarding the development of a peasant attitude upon the part of the American farmer, it is not at all clear that this process is being significantly affected by the increase in the number of external contacts made possible through the use of the automobile. As far as America, at least, is concerned, the present is very much a motor age. Class lines are in a general way marked by the makes and models of cars driven. The coming of the automobile has without doubt been responsible for bringing the farmer class more completely under the observation of other social groups. But there seems to be no good reason for supposing that the farmer's relative social position has been raised thereby. Typically, the farmer drives the cheaper makes of cars and his full share of the older models. While some individual farm people are to be seen riding in the newer models of the more expensive makes of motor vehicles, such cases are obviously not typical, any more than were the cases of the farmers of past decades who came to town in fine carriages drawn by attractive driving horses.

Within his own occupational group, the farmer's range of contacts has undoubtedly been widened by the use of the automobile. Business

[1] Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

[2] Pound, Arthur, "The Ford Myth," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 133, pp. 41–49, January, 1924.

and social affairs within the group can now be organized in larger units. The farmer has attained a higher degree of freedom in the matter of choice as to external contacts outside of his group. In his quest for amusement and for business bargains as regards both what he has to sell and what he desires to buy, he can pass right by or through his old home village on his way to a larger town. This latter tendency has become general enough in many regions to make for the almost complete elimination of some of the smaller business and recreation centers. But such contacts, widened though they are, are not different in kind and remain as essentially occupational in character.

Rural Free Delivery and Telephone

These two agencies of communication may easily be thought of together. It is only since the beginning of the present century that any significant number of farming people have been served by either agency, and at the present time both are in general use by farmers in all of the more prosperous communities the nation over. The relationship between prosperity and progressiveness upon the one hand and the use of modern means of communication upon the other is undoubtedly one of interdependence. Groups of forward-looking farming people who can afford it avail themselves, when circumstances permit, of the convenience of daily mail service and of telephone connections among themselves and with the towns; and the use of these means of communication is just as likely in turn to contribute to the prosperity and progress of those affected. The maintenance of both services is contingent upon a certain degree of group activity. In general, it would be out of the question for individual farm families by themselves to secure these conveniences. Groups of farmers keep their roads in a satisfactory condition and meet such other requirements as are stipulated to entitle them to daily mail service. Groups, also, cooperate to make it possible for telephone companies to establish and maintain "farmer lines." Of the two, daily mail service is received by fully 50 per cent more farm homes than is the case with telephone service. This difference is to be expected when one remembers that rural delivery of mail, when provided, is free; all of the families on a route, however unprogressive or lacking in financial resources they may be in individual cases, are served, provided only that they purchase suitable receptacles and place them by the roadside. Telephone service, upon the other hand, must be paid for by each family receiving its benefits. More than 60 per cent of farm homes have daily mail service, while less than 40 per cent (38.9 per cent in 1920) have telephones.

The advantages to the farm home of being connected with the outside world by telephone and daily mail while being fairly obvious can best be appreciated by those who have lived a considerable part of their lives

on farms lacking these agencies of communication. The isolation of women whose nearest neighbors live a considerable distance away and to whom mail may be brought from town only at intervals of several days is likely to be especially painful, when not deadening. To them the coming of these two conveniences of communication is likely to mean, at the least, an inestimable relief from monotony, with the possibility of a positive enrichment of the day's experience.

If communication be easy and rapid, as may be the case by daily mail and telephone, relatives and other former associates will not seem to be so far away as they otherwise would when they may be physically many miles distant. The individual has his existence as a part of the group. Through the use of modern means of communication, the somewhat physically isolated farm family can maintain group relationships that would otherwise be weakened and possibly broken. Former neighbors living in town, children who have gone to the city or to college may be quickly reached in case of emergency by a long-distance telephone connection. In such a situation, the loneliness of farm life has lost much of its reality. The mere possibility of promptly communicating with those who are hundreds of miles away through the use of the long-distance telephone may add much to the social satisfactions of life, even though one may seldom consider an emergency great enough to justify the added expense.

The Press

The City Daily.—With the coming of daily mail service, the possibility was afforded to farming people to have delivered at their doors each day the same paper that was being read by the people of the city. While in most cases it could not reach them on the day of its issue, that it could come at all and be delivered daily was a great step ahead from the previous situation. Following the establishment of rural free delivery, metropolitan dailies in large proportions began to develop special sections containing matter intended to be of interest mainly to farmer readers. The circulation of such papers rapidly increased among farming people. The process is apparently a continuing one—great city dailies taking more and more interest in their country subscribers and the country subscription lists gradually lengthening. To just what extent the increase in numbers of farmer readers may be due to the elaboration of specifically agricultural departments in the papers, it is impossible to say. An increased interest among farmers in the things of the city and in matters of general concern is assuredly an important factor, and possibly the factor of chief importance. It is of course understandable that if a farmer is trying to decide which of two city dailies he will take, the fact that one devotes more space than the other to matters specifically agricultural in nature is likely to incline him to subscribe to that one.

Those who are accustomed to think of all the affairs of life as being easily amenable to classification into "rural" and "urban" are likely to feel that the great daily papers are overwhelmingly urban in content. One such person, after having ascertained that an average of only about 5 per cent of the space in several metropolitan dailies was given over to matters specifically of an agricultural nature, came to the conclusion that farming people were not getting their fair share of attention in the papers. The argument was to the effect that, as farmers constitute about a quarter of the total population of the country, the papers in order to deal fairly with them should devote 25 per cent of their space to agricultural items.[1] The fallacy of this argument consists in the fact that the greater part of life's interests with which the daily press should concern itself are specifically neither rural nor urban in character. That which is broadly human in its significance cannot be fenced in by rural-urban barriers. The greater part of the reading space in the more important metropolitan dailies is devoted to matters that may be supposed to be of as much interest to the well-read farmer as to the man in the city. Discussions of the political aspects of state, national and world affairs; news items having to do with polar explorations and record-making aerial flights; accounts of the developments in general in the fields of science, invention, music, art, literature, education, religion, sport; human interest stories dealing with the more or less important happenings in the lives of famous persons—it cannot be assumed that the farmer is less interested in all of these than are men in other occupations whose homes chance to be in the city. Even the space taken up in the dailies with matters peculiarly local in significance cannot be considered a total loss as far as farmer readers are concerned. Great cities in reality extend themselves over a much larger area than that surrounded by their political boundaries. Each city is a center of interest for many farmers and other people who live outside its political jurisdiction. Those, for example, living in the Detroit area of interest tend to identify themselves so completely with their city center that they are likely to care as much for the discussions of purely local affairs in the Detroit papers as do the residents of the city itself. The rural free delivery, the radio, and other modern means of communication are obviously largely responsible for bringing about this condition of increased social integration.

The Country Weekly.—The village weekly paper has a unique place to fill in the life of its community. Its function is quite different from that of the city daily, upon the one hand, and of the agricultural journal, upon the other. It should not attempt to take the place of either of the others but should try to do well what it alone can do. Its task is to serve as a means of communication for its own community. It is a local com-

[1] Taylor, Estes P., "Agriculture in the Metropolitan Press," *Rural America*, January, 1929.

munity institution just as are the churches and schools in its area. The editor may be just as truly a community servant as are the ministers and teachers, and his influence for wholesome community life may be as important as that of any man in the community.

The village weekly is often criticized for its inclusion of so many items dealing with "insignificant" happenings in the life of the community. Significance, obviously, is all a matter of point of view. Each member of the community has a certain degree of importance to himself, his family, and usually others outside his immediate family. If the most noteworthy events in the lives of many are of little interest to most of those who read the paper, still it may well be argued that each member of the community should be enabled occasionally to see his name in print and to know that others are seeing it there. The fact that some individuals of lesser prominence never accomplish anything more striking than taking a somewhat extended motor trip or experiencing a successful day's fishing or being confined to the house for a short while because of some minor ailment, will mean that such publicity as such persons receive in the paper must deal with matters of relatively minor significance.

A more valid reason for criticism of many village weeklies than that they give much space to "personals," narrating most ordinary happenings in the lives of ordinary people, is that the editors give no evidence of holding a constructive attitude toward the life of the community. The readers of the paper should be aided by it to develop a community consciousness, to see themselves as parts of a whole. They should be enabled to feel that they may look to the paper for leadership in the struggle to make of their community a better place in which to live. Through the influence of the paper, farmers and villagers should be enabled to draw closely together, realizing more keenly than they otherwise could their dependence upon each other. They should be aided to understand that the economic prosperity of the whole trade area may be best advanced through cooperative attitudes and teamwork. They should be aided, also, to the realization that there are higher criteria of community success than the economic. They should be enabled to see fairly the place of their community in a society of neighboring communities. As they compare their progress with that of the others, they should be encouraged through their paper to become proud of the right things.

A diminution of the number of rural weekly papers is to be expected with the decline in importance of many country villages as a part of the process of community reorganization now taking place. It has been estimated that between three and four thousand papers have died during the last decade. There is nothing in this fact, as such, to indicate a decline in importance of this type of journalism. It may indicate as

normal a process of development as does the abandonment of one-room schoolhouses with the advance of consolidation.

The small-town weekly can be no finer than the type of man who manages it. In a large proportion of cases this man is a printer and publisher rather than an editor, a business man in attitude rather than one actuated by professional spirit, to be thought of as belonging, possibly, with the most narrow, least progressive business men in town rather than with those who are most far-sighted. One of the greatest present needs of rural life is the development of a class of editors who will measure up as completely to the possibilities of their calling as do the most sanely progressive teachers in the schools.

The Radio

There can be no question that the radio is one of the more important isolation-dispelling agencies in the present day. Those farm families who have provided themselves with receiving sets and who make any considerable use of them, however remote may be their homes from towns or neighbor farmers, are thus brought into contact with the life of the outside world. The number of radios in farm homes is larger than one might at first suppose. As long ago as 1925, there were 553,000 receiving sets on the farms in the United States, at that early date in radio history about one farm in every twelve being supplied with one. Since 1925 the number must have been very greatly increased. This is true if the situation reported for Pennsylvania is at all typical. In that state during the three-year period 1924–1927, the number of radios on farms increased 234 per cent.[1]

A study made by George F. Johnson for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture contains considerable information concerning the use of the radio by farmers. The study is based upon data furnished in 1928 by 352 farmers out of approximately 1,800 to whom questionnaires were sent. As is the case with every such study, one becomes curious as to the overwhelming majority who fail to return the questionnaires. It seems probable that, had the entire 1,800 furnished the desired information, a less favorable picture as regards interest in and dependence upon the radio would have been presented than the one that we now have based upon the answers given by the less than 20 per cent who did give their answers to the questions asked.

The average cost of the radio, as reported by the 312 who answered the question regarding purchase price, was $111.36, an amount sufficiently high to pay for a fairly substantial receiving set. Professor Burr asserts that the cost of the radio including upkeep is regarded by the farmer

[1] Johnson, George F., "How Farmers Regard the Radio and Radio Programs," *General Bulletin* 468, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Harrisburg, Pa. November, 1928.

as an investment, because of the use he makes of it in his business, through the information it gives him regarding the weather and the markets.[1] The assertion is an exaggeration. Only 199 of the 352 Pennsylvania farmers reporting said that they made use of the radio market reports to guide them in their buying and selling; and only 274 of the 352 reported that the weather reports helped them in planning their farm work. Many of those who make use of the broadcasted weather and market reports regard the radio mainly as a luxury rather than a business investment, classifying it with the piano and the victrola, not with the farm economic equipment.

Possibly the most significant phase of the Pennsylvania study has to do with the types of radio features preferred by farmers. Radio broadcasting stations are located almost entirely in the cities, and they serve mainly an urban audience. The stations are most zealous in their attempts to ascertain the types of program desired by those who listen in. They probably succeed in giving the maximum amount of pleasure and satisfaction which the circumstances permit for their vast audiences. If the 352 Pennsylvania farmers are a fairly representative group, radio programs would undergo a radical change, should they be altered to suit merely the farming people. The musical portions of the programs would need to be made up very largely of old-time songs, both secular and sacred, along with an increase of time allotted to barn dances. Both classical music and "jazz," a term used indiscriminately for all modern "popular" music both vocal and instrumental, would take up much less space on the program. Of those who indicated various types of programs as having an appeal to them, without naming the types in order of preference, 138 checked "old-time songs"; 131, "sacred songs"; 92, "barn dances"; 57, classical music; 32, jazz music. Of those who indicated the first choice, 32 so designated old-time songs; 29, classical music; 24, sacred songs; 11, jazz; and 6, barn dances.

Church services rate high in their interest to farmers who have radios, 33 in the Pennsylvania group indicating a first choice for that type of broadcasting, a larger number by one than mentioned the first choice for any other sort of program. One hundred twenty-one checked church services as having an appeal to them, without indicating its place in any order of preference and giving this item a position slightly below that held by sacred songs and considerably higher than that held by barn dances.

Cooking recipes occupies a place at the bottom of the list of eleven types of radio features, as far as first choices go, no one indicating a first choice for this item. It occupies the place next to the bottom exceeding only jazz music in popularity as shown by the number checking it but not indicating its place in an order of preference.

[1] Burr, Walter, *Small Towns*. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929.

The farmers' traditional conservatism is well exemplified in their choices of radio features. As a group, judging on the basis of this single study, they prefer the old familiar music and church services to the newer songs and dance music which are at present so popular in the cities. It may be that the sort of music which was "new" a generation or more ago is actually better music than that which is new at the present time. It is fairly clear, however, that the farmer does not choose the old music because of its superiority over the new. He chooses it because he became accustomed to it in his childhood and learned to like it when his taste for things musical was first being formed. The great classics, the best of all music, are predominantly old, but they are not familiar to the American farmer to any greater extent than are the classics in various other fields of the fine arts. Therefore barn dances with which the farmer is familiar occupy a higher place in the scale than classical music. James M. Williams, in discussing New York farmers of an earlier day, mentions their special dislike for "new-fangled" singing, by which is meant vocal music characterized by "trills and high notes and dramatic action."[1] It is undoubtedly the case that the attitude mentioned by Williams has been held by American farmers of every part of the country. Neither can there be any doubt that this attitude has persisted till the present time. Certain individuals who offered comments as part of the Pennsylvania radio study mention specifically a dislike for soprano singing.

Several of the farmers cooperating in the Pennsylvania study expressed a wish that the number of broadcasting stations might be greatly reduced through the elimination of local stations of small power. While not entirely satisfied with the type of programs furnished by the great city stations, these farmers apparently prefer to depend upon them for their broadcasted enlightenment and entertainment rather than upon smaller and less distant stations which very likely plan their programs with the rural audience largely in mind.

Agricultural Lectures.—Seventy-seven per cent of those taking part in the Pennsylvania study reported that they made it a point to listen in on farm talks and other programs designed specially for farmers. Professor Burr, in discussing the farm radio situation in Kansas, informs us that according to a recent survey in that state 1,662 farm families, approximately 70 per cent of 2,384 investigated, tune in on farm lectures at least twice a week, while 662, or about 28 per cent of the number, listen to the farm programs every day.[2] If those who listen to the expert advice constantly emanating from state experimental stations and from the U. S. Department of Agriculture make practical use of any considerable part of the information thus received, the radio must be given credit for appreciably improving farm methods in the United States.

[1] WILLIAMS, J. M., *Our Rural Heritage*, p. 206, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1925

[2] BURR, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

While broadcasted information is usually available in printed form, departmental bulletins, farm-paper articles, and the like, it is undoubtedly the case that broadcasted material gets to the listening farmer in more effective form than it could otherwise be presented to him. A very few, carefully selected matters are presented at a time and in easily understandable language.

One interesting question for research has to do with the language and method of presentation best suited to a farmer audience. It is the present custom to present much of this material in narrative or story form, fictitious characters referred to by their given names being made use of, supposedly to add vividness to the presentation. The broadcaster, who possibly has never even seen a farm, is known for the occasion as "County Agent Blank." He reads a prepared narrative in which are depicted the imagined occupational perplexities of "Bob ———," "Jim ———," "Neighbor ———," and others who have come to the county agent for assistance. The county agent, referred to in the story in the first person, being an agricultural expert and having at his command the latest findings from the various experimental stations, is readily able to furnish the needed aid to Bob, Jim, and the others.

The disinterested radio listener must certainly gain the impression that farm people are quite unlike the business men of the cities for whose benefit, mainly, reports of the Department of Commerce are broadcasted. The question, surely worthy of investigation, is whether or not the majority of farmers who listen to farm talks and profit by them prefer the somewhat juvenile method so largely in use. The short narratives are obviously not intended to be interesting enough to be classified as entertainment. The story is merely a sugar coating designed to render the pill of information more readily acceptable and the question at issue is whether or not the twentieth century American farmer needs or prefers to have his information pellets "doctored."

Weather Predictions.—More than 75 per cent of those farmers cooperating in the Pennsylvania study said that they found that the radio weather reports helped them in the planning of their work. The science of weather prediction has developed such a high degree of accuracy that those who are occupationally so largely dependent upon the weather for their success, as are farming people, are bound to profit greatly through advance information as to probable weather changes. Prior to the time—only a very few years ago—that the broadcasting of weather news was inaugurated, this information was carried to the farmers by telephone. The radio broadcast is, for those possessing receiving sets with loud speakers, a much more convenient means of obtaining the information.

Cultural Influence of the Radio.—It is quite probable that, to a greater extent than any other agency, the radio merges the lives of those

who make use of it into the general life of the larger society. All that is required is that one shall assume a comfortable position and in fairly attentive mood listen to what is to be heard. In comparison with the radio, the automobile is likely to be much more narrowly selective in its influence. When the farmer drives his car, he chooses on the basis of whatever sort of nature he has previously developed where he shall drive. The car may carry its driver many miles easily and swiftly without bringing him into contact with a single stimulatingly new idea or emotion. The automobile gives the farmer the physical possibility of attending important lectures and sermons and concerts many miles distant from his home. There are serious obstacles, in part physical and more largely mental, which tend to keep the farmer from using his car for such purposes. The farmer's reading is likely also to be narrowly selective in nature, both through the sorts of papers and magazines to which he subscribes and through his individual choice from the available material of what he shall read.

The radio, as well as the automobile, newspaper, and magazine, offers real possibilities in the direction of affording a narrow range of material. Obviously the hearer may choose in advance to what he will listen and keep the instrument silent when it is not furnishing him with his chosen type of program. One is not likely, however, to use his radio receiving set in this way. It is much easier to listen to whatever comes over the air after one has "tuned in" to a given station, especially if one is tired from the day's exertions and has found a comfortable position in which to rest and listen. A three-hour evening program from any of the larger stations generally provides a considerable variety of material, and over a comparatively short space of time the listener is likely to find himself developing new tastes and new intellectual interests. The new tastes and interests developed are not inevitably superior in themselves to those which they have displaced but they are quite certain to bring the listener into a more complete and vital membership of the larger society than that which he has heretofore maintained.

Among the cultural benefits which may be expected to accrue to farming people, as well as to others, through the use of the radio may be mentioned the development of enlarged vocabularies, the elimination of peculiarities in pronunciation, the elevation of the standards of musical taste, the lowering of barriers of prejudice separating those of differing nationalities and religious beliefs, the admission to the thought world of new ideas, constituting an expansion and enrichment of the mental life.

From the standpoint of a separate-rural-civilization ideal the widespread use of the radio by farmers is undoubtedly to be deplored. Nothing more effectively works against separateness than does the radio broadcast. If it were true, as some writers apparently assume, that ideas and sentiments may be neatly classified into rural and urban, then

it, without doubt, would also be true that the radio is mainly utilized for the spreading of urban influences, thus becoming an agency of urban domination over the countryside. This would be true because the radio is city-owned and operated. It is one of the chief contentions of this book, however, that most of the things that people talk about, aside from purely occupational matters, even in the case of those things that are spoken into microphones, are not distinctively of either rural or urban significance.

Sixty-two per cent of those farmers who aided in the Pennsylvania study expressed the belief that the radio serves to keep young men and women interested in life on the farm. Just how many farm-born young people who would not otherwise do so remain on farms because of the influence of the radio, no one can say. Without doubt, in many cases the radio by rendering life in the farm home more interesting than it has been in the past is sufficient to be the determining factor in swinging the young person's decision to agriculture as an occupation. It may be that in an equally large number of cases it is just as sufficient to carry farm-born young men and women to the cities, owing to its disturbing influence upon those who would otherwise remain contentedly in the traditional way of life. It is a fact that the radio serves to increase the freedom of choice of those who are much under its influence. Both those who go from farms and those who remain are making their occupational choices from a wider stream of suggestions than would otherwise be available to them. This is possibly the greatest benefit of radio to farm people.

The Motion Picture

For city dwellers the motion picture is probably of fully as great importance as the radio as a means of communication. It is certain that larger numbers of city residents are fairly regular in attendance at the pictures than have radios in their homes. It without doubt is equally true that regular patrons of motion pictures who also have radios in their homes are, in general, more deeply affected through the former medium of communication than through the latter. The reasons why this may be assumed are at least two. In the first place, the motion picture is likely to secure a more complete monopoly of the person's attention during the time it is being viewed than the radio often secures. This is partly because of the period of anticipatory preparation which precedes the viewing of a picture, along with the fact that the viewer must pay a certain amount of money for each separate period of picture enjoyment. After one is once in possession of a radio set the enjoyment to be secured through it is likely to be to such a degree taken for granted that much of the possible thrill is lost. It may become as matter-of-fact an event to tune in on a splendid orchestral program as to raise the window shade

allowing more sunshine to enter the room—and an event well-nigh as devoid of excitement.

In the second place, the motion picture appeals to the visual sense as well as to the auditory, thus making a double impact, calling for more complete attention upon the part of the audience and leaving with the individuals in attendance a more vivid impression than could have been given through merely one avenue of approach, such as is the case with the radio, and formerly with the silent pictures.

The usual motion picture program offers a combination of news items and photodrama. The former makes more vivid the news material that one has possibly previously obtained by means of newspapers or radio. The latter makes somewhat the same art contribution as is made by the novel and the legitimate drama. Through both of these elements in the program, the motion picture affords great possibilities in the direction of increased enrichment of life for those who make discriminating use of what is offered. It is assuredly not the fault of the medium of communication if the general effect of the influence of the motion picture is, as some assert, unlovely in the extreme. An organized public opinion may make of the pictures what it will. To the extent that the art form is not taken so seriously as other forms of art whose prestige is enhanced by tradition, the art contribution conveyed through the communicating medium is bound to be cheapened. The continued and general use of such terms as "movie" and "talkie" is enough in itself to detract seriously from the dignified reception which must be accorded to any art form in order that it may make its finest contribution.

Back of whatever lack of seriousness there may be in the public's attitude toward the screen is the mistaken notion generally held that a picturized drama is in some way less real than one acted by flesh-and-blood actors upon a stage. The fallacy in this notion consists in a failure to realize that, if there is to be any drama at all, it must find its existence within the auditor's mind rather than in any external place. That medium of communication is most suitable which most effectively carries from the mind of the artist to the mind of the one who sees and hears. In the experience of many cultured people the screen has proved itself to be fully as effective a medium of artistic transmission as the stage. Those who wish only light, frivolous entertainment and are culturally prepared for nothing finer without doubt occupy most of the seats in the urban picture palaces. There is, however, a significant minority of persons who are asking of the artist, in whatever medium he may choose to work, that he give them convincing portrayals of life in all its important phases. These persons are coming to be as appreciative of artistic values conveyed to them through the medium of the motion picture screen as through any of the longer-established forms of expression. Any hope for the elevation of motion picture art must be based

upon changing public attitudes influenced through leadership furnished by the minority who are capable of taking a sound critical position in regard to any art form.

In rural communities as a whole compared with urban communities, it is certain that the motion picture is a relatively less significant agency of communication than the radio. There are good reasons for believing that this may always continue to be true. In the first place, the farm home is farther away from the nearest motion picture theater than is the home of the city resident, involving a greater expenditure of time and effort upon the farmer's part to attend picture entertainments than is called for in the case of city people, while the radio loud-speaker is as accessible in one case as the other. In the second place, while small-town motion picture entertainment is in general at the present time inferior to that of the cities and in certain respects is likely to continue to be such, the farmer may get as good a radio program as anyone else, provided only that he possess an adequate radio set. Then, too, the farmer may have the satisfaction of knowing that his radio programs come directly to him just as they do to the generally more favored members of society, instead of coming secondhand after the larger cities are through with them, as is usually the case with motion picture films.

While the farmer is at a disadvantage compared with people of the cities as regards motion picture entertainment, the facts remain that small towns are in general supplied with theaters and that these picture theaters are to a considerable extent patronized by farmers. This being the case, it should be considered one of the many responsibilities of community leadership to develop attitudes favorable to the maintenance of as high a quality of motion picture entertainment as may be achieved.

Present Situation Regarding Motion Pictures in Rural Communities.—Reports furnished by summer session students (1931) at the University of Michigan who are familiar with the conditions in 49 towns, mainly in southern Michigan, indicate the following to be true as regards these towns. Towns of less than 500 population have no picture theaters. Those having populations of more than 500 but of less than 1,000 have motion picture entertainment one or two nights a week. In the group of those towns of more than 1,000 but of less than 2,500 (reports secured from 24 towns) only 25 per cent have pictures every night of the week. In all towns of more than 2,500 population for which information was secured pictures are exhibited every night. (While these larger towns are urban rather than rural, all of those for which reports were secured are small enough so that a great deal of the picture patronage is from the surrounding farms.)

Those towns of the 500 to 1,000 group able to support a motion picture theater were in every case characterized by good community spirit. In

several cases, theaters had been closed because of a failure to hold their own in competition with those in other near-by towns, usually somewhat larger in size. The automobile gives the owner the opportunity in the case of motion pictures, as with everything else, to pass by his neighboring small town in quest of what he considers to be superior quality. Because of the easy mobility of rural people, comparatively slight advantages in managerial ability are proved to be very important factors in determining which theaters shall survive.

All theaters upon which reports were secured were supplied with sound equipment. In most of the cases this was not of the best, but sound equipment of some sort was necessary. It is said that there is not at the present time a sufficient supply of new silent pictures to keep a theater in operation and, in any case, that silent pictures would not be patronized by those who have automobiles and can get to a theater exhibiting sound pictures.

It is not in equipment alone that small-town theaters are generally inferior to the best to be found in the cities. It is also the case that the pictures exhibited are likely to be of inferior quality. In certain towns, the pictures to be seen on Saturday night are of a cheaper type than those exhibited on other evenings. This is said to be due to the fact that Saturday night is the farmer's night in town and that he will patronize whatever is on display. As "westerns" and serials and slapstick comedy cost the management less than other types of pictures, it is entertainment of the former sort that the farmer is likely to get if he unquestioningly accepts what is put before him. As a matter of fact, there is some evidence that the farmer actually prefers pictures of an inferior sort, as regards their content. A study of motion picture preferences made in 1930 in four rural communities in Vermont indicated that "western" action pictures with happy endings were preferred above all others.[1] It may be argued that, as the farmer is more familiar with this type of picture than with any other, it is the one that first comes to his mind when he is asked to name his preferences. It is more probable, however, that the typical farmer's degree of cultural development is such as to prepare him best for the relatively primitive examples of any art. Neither his formal education nor his farm experience has furnished him the requisite background for an appreciation of art portrayals of the subtle motivation which so importantly characterizes life. If this be the case, the farmer, as he is, is not being duped on his Saturday nights in town by being provided with the cheaper types of motion picture entertainment.

The better pictures which the farmer sees in his home-town theater are usually somewhat old, having been exhibited possibly in several

[1] JONES, H. E., and H. T. CONRAD, "Rural Preferences in Motion Pictures," *Journal of Social Psychology*, August, 1931.

larger theaters before their rental value falls low enough to make their exhibition in a small town practicable. Even news reels arrive in the small town two weeks or more after they have been given their first showing.

In the forty-nine towns reported upon by the Michigan students, there is an almost entire lack of organized social effort exercised in the direction of control of the local motion picture situation. Each theater manager, in general, is going his independent way, trying like any other business man to make a profit.

The following are some of the more salient facts which should be considered by those who are concerned with the elevation of cultural standards among rural people:

1. The motion picture is an extremely important agency of communication. It affords almost untold possibilities both of life enrichment and of life impoverishment.

2. The best pictures that are produced, whatever one may mean by "best," are available for rental to small town theaters.[1]

3. While the best in motion pictures may be brought to the small town, such is not the case with the stage drama. Pictures starring George Arliss and John Barrymore, for example, may be seen in any small town which is willing to wait its turn, as determined by economic demand, while most towns are too small to hope ever to be visited by first rank actors in their stage presentations.

4. There is good reason for holding that, in general, the artistic worth of a screen production is fully as high as that of the same play produced by a cast of comparable quality upon the stage, this, of course, being true only if the projecting equipment is adequate.

5. The late showing of a film in the small town does not necessarily detract from its value. It may be of small actual consequence even in the case of so-called "news items." To the urban theater goer who reads the papers or listens to radio news recitals, the news reel very seldom gives new information. It is important to him rather through its power to make more vivid the information previously received through other sources. Whether the showing of the film occurs two weeks rather than two days after the event pictured may make little significant difference. It is of course true that rural people are likely to develop attitudes of inferiority with the realization that they are somewhat behind the times as compared with the cities. The late showing of motion pictures, however, is one of the least important manifestations of this phenomenon.

6. The best results cannot be achieved unless there be community action to encourage the presentation and patronage of programs of a

[1] Joy, Jason F., "Small Towns Can Have Good Movies," *Rural America*, September, 1926.

worthy sort. This action includes, upon the one hand, the development of appreciation among picture goers for pictures of good quality and, upon the other, a convincing of the theater management that the presentation of high-class programs would be profitable. Leadership in such an organization of local opinion as would make such community action possible must come, if at all, from those who are interested in the development of high cultural standards generally in the community. Ministers, teachers, and other community leaders who are interested, for example, in the maintenance of good library facilities in the community should feel it to be fully as important that their influence count in the direction of high motion picture standards. The fact that the motion picture is a commercial institution in no way prevents the development of a large measure of social control.

CHAPTER XIV

RURAL SCHOOL

Function of the Rural School

One's conception of the function of the rural school is in part determined by his conception of the proper relation of the rural community to its individual members. One may start his thinking with either the community or the individual. If he believes in the primary importance of the community more or less statically considered, he should then argue for a certain degree of limitation of individual freedom, in order that community strength may be maintained. If, upon the other hand, he feels that all social institutions should work with the individual primarily in mind, he is prepared to accept whatever community transformation may result owing to individual development. Effective thought in this field seems to demand that those who consider the matter shall decide quite definitely which they will put first, community or individual.

Writers are not at all rare who seem in one paragraph to accept the principle of full personal development for the farm-born child as the function of the rural school and in the next to say that personal development of the individual must not be allowed to go far enough to work injury to the rural community through depleting it of its best stock. These writers wish both a truly cultural development for children born on farms and at the same time the establishment and perpetuation of a distinctly rural civilization. That these two are quite likely to be in conflict is well indicated by Sims·

> What may be desirable for the individual may not always be good for the group; or, again, what may be good for one group may not be good for another. Thus to open for the city child as many possibilities as civilization presents and invite him to choose will be good for the child and presumably good for the urban group of which he is a part. But to do this for the rural child, beneficial though it may be to him as an individual, may work to the disadvantage of the rural group by causing needless depletion of its ranks. Such an outcome would seem probable since rural society at the present time, when compared with urban, has a very limited range of opportunities to offer. The advantage is largely with the city. Hence, however praiseworthy from the viewpoint of the individual, it may be to bring to the country child a knowledge of all that is good in city and town, the possible harm resulting to the group makes such a program of doubtful merit from the group's standpoint.[1]

[1] Sims, N. L., *Elements of Rural Sociology*, p. 298, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1928.

There is, one gathers from a perusal of recent texts in rural sociology, an increasing tendency to stress the desirability of the child's personal development, even at the expense, if need be, of community strength. Less and less is being said of the desirability of educating in such a way that the child will remain in the parental occupation. While all would agree that the possibilities of agriculture as an occupation should be presented in a fair light to farm-born children, there is a lessened tendency to advocate a program of farm propaganda for the rural schools. Education, some writer has said, is the process of teaching children *how* to think, while propaganda is the process of teaching them *what* to think. Apparently, there is an increasing conviction that the business of the schools is that of education.

As to the relation of the community to its members, the ideal situation would seem to be one in which the community is not thought of as an end in itself in conflict with individual ends, but rather as a means to an end, which end is service, upon the one hand, to the individual members and, upon the other, to the larger society. One of the chief obligations of the community to its members is to convey to them a wide, full, free view of the larger society of which they are all parts. In the performance of this obligation, its own life may suffer radical change and possibly decay. In other words, a good community will lay down its life, if necessary, for its members. If more concerned with its own perpetuation than with the freedom which its children enjoy, it is not worth perpetuating.

The function of the school, one of the most important of community agencies, is to those who consider the matter in this latter light perfectly plain. Whether rural or urban, its purpose should be to give the individual child as complete a knowledge of the world as may practicably be given within the time afforded, accompanied by at least a certain minimum amount of training in preparation for the making of a living.

Just how much and what sorts of vocational training should be provided by the public school is yet a much disputed point. All would agree that the pupil should develop in school at least a certain degree of skill in reading, writing, and arithmetic, whatever may chance to be his future vocation. Just what subjects should be taught in primary and secondary schools, and just how they should be presented for the purpose of aiding the pupil to acquire or develop culture, meaning by that term adaptation to life as distinguished from adaptation to a job, is likely always to be a controversial matter. It should be perfectly clear, however, that cultural education is a preparation for *life*, rather than for either rural or urban life specifically. To the broadly cultured person, the rural-urban barrier has little existence in experience. He is about equally at home in either city or country. The schools should educate in terms of that broad culture, so that its product may be, first of all, men

and women and only secondarily, and perhaps incidentally, ruralites and urbanites.

The Ideal Teacher

It is possibly a truism to say that the teacher is the most important element in a good school. More important than building and physical equipment, more important even than the courses given is the teacher who occupies the position of leader to the pupil who is in the process of securing an education. While it is too much to hope that a large proportion of those in the teaching profession will measure up to the standard that one may set down as an ideal, it is essential that those who think about these matters shall have rather clearly in mind a picture of the ideal teacher. For this reason, the writer suggests certain essential characteristics of such a teacher of the rural school:

1. Ability to Lead.—This involves the possession of a character which impresses both the pupils and their parents with its significance. The teacher must convey the impression that he is important in himself, and not simply as a dispenser of knowledge from books. It involves, also, the possession of a likeable personality, with which he is not apt to be characterized unless he himself sincerely likes people in general and especially the children whom he teaches.

2. Broad Culture.—He should stand in the local community in which he works as a representative of the great outside world of culture. He should show in his life and teaching the influence upon himself of a somewhat broad range of contacts derived through travel and reading. He should give constant evidence of the possession of a wide variety of wholesome interests.

3. Love of the Country.—While the broadly cultured person is quite sure to care for the things of nature, it is worth while giving this characteristic special treatment and emphasis. He should actually care for, and show that he cares for, whatever elements of natural beauty there may be in the rural community in which he is located and, if possible, develop in his pupils a greater appreciation for whatever is fine in their physical environment than they would otherwise have. He should have, and give evidence of possessing, a respect for the occupation of agriculture. His love of the country and respect for agriculture, however, should not involve a prejudice against whatever is worth while in urban life.

4. Community Spirit.—He should consider himself, at least temporarily, a real member of the community in which he lives and works. This should not involve his overloading himself with community activities, but he should be sincerely eager to do something more for his community than is specified in his contract as a teacher.

These four characteristics, in addition to those that might more immediately occur to one, are possessed by the best teachers in rural

schools. It goes without saying that a good academic record is essential, and a good quality of professional spirit impelling the individual toward advancement in his chosen career.

While there undoubtedly are great numbers of men and women in America who have it in them to rate high as to each of the above-mentioned characteristics, very few of these people are teaching in the rural schools. The reasons for the lack of such teachers are two. In the first place, in general, those responsible for employing teachers have no such standard of qualifications in mind. Then, the lack of sufficient money with which to pay adequate salaries would prevent employing such teachers, even were they desired. Poor qualifications and low salaries go hand in hand, each in part the cause of the other. Educational progress is dependent upon the development of higher ideals as to desirable qualifications of teachers, backed by the setting aside of a larger share of our huge national income for the purpose of education.

The usual teacher in the American rural school is a girl of about twenty who was born on a farm in or near the community where she teaches. She is a graduate of a village high school, with little professional training. She has been teaching for one or two years and does not intend to teach more than one or two years more before her marriage. She did not do especially well in school, is not greatly interested in education, and has never seriously considered the teaching of school as a career. Unless her home is in the community, she spends simply the minimum amount of time possible with the people of that community, hurrying home at the close of the week's teaching. If she does live in the community, she is not at all well prepared to give any significant service to it but merely continues her life as a member of the same small group with which she has been associated all along and is considered by the school patrons mainly from the standpoint of the family of which she is a part. If there are community factions, she is a member of one of them along with her parents, which greatly deprives her of the opportunity of doing much in the way of community service, even were she otherwise well equipped for it. The attitude of the patrons toward her very likely insures that she shall not greatly influence the thinking of her pupils. If she has a prejudice against the city, she may be doing something toward the spread of such an attitude. If, upon the other hand, she finds country life and agriculture undesirable and is continually wishing to make her own escape, she may be doing much to inculcate this idea in the minds of her pupils. She is both unread and untraveled, with no broader viewpoint than that of the small rural community of which she is a product, utterly unfitted for real cultural leadership.

In general, Americans are prone to express a belief in education. It is obvious, however, that the great army of boys and girls on farms are getting almost nothing through the influence of such teachers as the one

described above to prepare them for constructive living in a twentieth century America. The real education obtained in such a situation comes from outside the school. Parental and neighborhood guidance to thinking is largely dominant, and this is bound to make in the main for attitudes of narrow traditionalism. In the schools is learned a certain body of facts which, even if remembered for any length of time, are so largely out of contact with the life of the pupil that one may think of them as being carried along in an external sort of way like pieces of luggage which the traveler might some day abandon without feeling much poorer. In other words, such schools do almost nothing to the real *selves* of the pupils in attendance, unless it be to accentuate somewhat the narrow attitudes formed under parental and neighborhood influence.

Basic Difficulties in Rural Education

There is no reason to suppose that small-farm school districts will ever be able by themselves to modernize their schools. They are lacking in both money and ideals. The school officials are frequently in office for the expressed purpose of keeping taxes low. They have no real conception of an educational need and therefore cannot be blamed for refusing to appropriate money for what to them is a useless luxury. Then, too, the real lack of financial resources acts as a damper upon whatever incipient educational enthusiasm may tend to show itself.

The situation regarding the schools in farming communities at the present time reminds one of that regarding the care of roads a generation ago. At that time, small road districts were typical. Each district had pretty complete charge of its own roads, being required only to expend upon them a certain small amount of labor annually. Only this minimum amount of attention was in general devoted to them; much of it was misdirected and worse than useless in its effect; and country roads were notoriously poor.

With the coming of the automobile came the desire of city dwellers to use the country roads, and with that desire came the urgent demand for good roads. There followed the state administration of its highways, with experts in charge, and with vast sums of money at their disposal. Modern roads began to extend themselves through formerly isolated rural regions, passing the homes of farmers who would have been utterly incapable of even desiring them, to say nothing of being able to plan them or pay for them.

In a large social view of the situation it is just as senseless for the state to require or even to permit the small agricultural district to educate its own children as it would be to allow the former road system to continue. After all, we are one people, and the children of all people have certain educational needs. Logically there should be a general pooling of ideas and of money in order that those needs should be fairly met. Cities

operate as educational units, the schools in the poorer and culturally more backward districts being as well-supported as the others. An extension of this principle throughout the state is called for unless we are ready to accept the idea that children who chance to live on farms should for that reason be educationally handicapped.

From a point of view more practical than ideal, the cities should largely meet the expense of the education of farm children because they are going to use them in their business, just as they largely pay for country roads, because they use them. A more ideal approach would be in terms of state and national pride. If this nation is to be in any real and enduring sense a great nation, the children of all of the people must be as well educated as their inherited capacities make possible. No large group may be omitted in such a program.

The Consolidated School

Should a thoroughgoing project of state administration of the educational process become effective, headed by educational experts and supported by ample funds, there can be no question but that consolidated schools would very soon displace nearly all of the small rural units which still so generally prevail. The advantages of the large-unit system are many.

1. It brings larger numbers of pupils together, this by itself tending to furnish the basis for more school enthusiasm. Both mental and physical development profit by the stimulus thus created.

2. It makes possible the use of specialized, thus of better-trained, teachers than can be had in the single-room school, and the separation of pupils into departments and grades.

3. It makes possible superintendence of a more complete and satisfactory type than can be obtained under the best imaginable system in which the teachers are widely scattered in one-room schools.

4. It increases attendance, partly because of increased interest on the part of the pupils, partly because the system for compelling attendance is likely to be more efficient than where the teachers and officials are living in close neighborhood relationship with those families whose children might be inclined toward frequent absence.

5. It increases high-school attendance greatly, because of the close articulation made possible between grades and high school. The high school is brought more constantly to the notice of grade pupils and, too, the probability is greatly increased of the pupils being really ready for high school upon finishing the grades than is the case with the children in single-room schools.

6. It provides a building, or buildings, in which may be housed the facilities and equipment that have long been available for use only in city schools.

7. If the building is located at the natural center of the community, the school thus becomes an agency for the development of community spirit. Its teachers may occupy posts of community service and leadership.

The main argument raised by farming people against consolidation is that of expense. While more value is derived from the money expended in consolidation than in the traditional system, there can be no doubt that the people of many districts cannot afford the extra expense involved in the more modern system. Other reasons for opposition to the consolidated school are to be found in the traditional attitudes of farming people. Some of these reasons are:

1. The hold of parents upon their children is somewhat relaxed through the coming of consolidation. The children while in school are farther away from home and are under the supervision of teachers in regard to whose selection the parents have had very little to say. The school under the new system becomes a much more influential factor than under the old, competing with parents more effectively as to the determination of the thought life of the child.

2. In those cases where the centralized school would be located in town, some parents fear the influence of town contacts. If the farmer parents are at all anxious for their children to remain in the parental occupation, they have good reason to fear the unsettling influence of the widened range of contacts.

3. Parents who desire short-time teaching jobs for their untrained daughters, either in the home district or some other one nearby, are likely to find this a very real, though unexpressed, reason for opposing consolidation.

4. Influential individuals in the local district who have grown accustomed to such authority and prestige as may go with a position on the school board are said to be likely to throw their influence against consolidation, urging *good* reasons rather than *real* ones for their stand. Obviously, these people themselves might be only dimly conscious of the real reason upon which their opposition rests.

In spite of obstacles, financial and otherwise, there are more than 16,000 consolidated schools in the United States. Even without further extension of state aid, the movement will undoubtedly continue to spread. The modern highways, provided largely at urban expense, are bound to facilitate the development of consolidation through lowering the cost of transportation. A thoroughgoing state system, however, would hasten this development and undoubtedly make for greatly increased efficiency.

Location of the Consolidated School.—Two sharply conflicting points of view are held regarding the proper location of the consolidated school. Those who believe in the desirability of attempting to maintain in Amer-

ica a separate agricultural civilization very naturally advocate the placing of the school building in the open country. They argue, very logically from their point of view, that the farm-born child should be shielded as much as possible from urban influences which might lead him away from the occupation of his father. They naturally argue also that those whom society wishes to become its farmers and wives of farmers, namely, the sons and daughters of farmers, should be given quite different courses than are given to those who supposedly are going to enter occupations other than farming. Thus, obviously, from this point of view, the two groups of children should be educated separately.

The opposing idea is that there is no more justification for the separate education of the children of farmers, than of the children of ministers, of barbers, or of retail grocers. According to this view, it is the child rather than the occupation of the father that should be kept mainly in mind when planning for the child's education. One of the chief benefits of consolidation, according to this way of looking at the matter, lies in the fact that through it an increased variety of contacts is made possible. In certain cases, there are no towns conveniently located to serve as community centers. In such cases, open-country consolidation is the only possibility and, from the broader social view point, the absence of villagers in such cases is something to be regretted.

Dwellings for Teachers.—Especially in those cases where the consolidated school is located in the open country, it is desirable that a house or houses for the married men teachers should be provided. As a part of their pay, those who are to teach in such schools should be assured of modern living quarters conveniently located. This would reduce somewhat the tendency for experienced teachers to go to the urban schools.

The idea of providing teachers with homes has spread much further in certain European countries than in America. In these countries, teachers are much more permanent than they are here, remaining in the profession longer and changing less frequently from school to school. Just how much the provision of homes may have to do with the difference in permanence between Europe and America obviously cannot be determined. It is very likely of some significance as contributing to increased dignity and importance of the teaching profession.

There is always a real danger, when modern and somewhat expensive buildings and equipment are provided, that the attention be directed mainly toward these things. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that all of these material objects are of significance only as aids to the teaching staff in the performance of their function as educators of those under their charge. It is far easier for most members of a community who are thinking at all of matters educational to compare their buildings and grounds with those of another community and to take pride in whatever

they are able to find there to be proud of than it is to be discerning regarding the merits of their teachers. This fact is true not only of rural schools but of urban as well, and sometimes even of colleges and universities. After all, education is brought about through the contact of mind upon mind, and it is of extreme importance to the youth of today and to the nation of tomorrow that the quality of the teaching personnel be the very best available.

The provision of good buildings and equipment, and of suitable living quarters, helps to make the profession of teaching more attractive than it could otherwise be, thus bringing into the profession and retaining there finer types of individuals than could otherwise be had. Much more than this is essential, however, if teaching is to be elevated to the level of such other of the learned professions as medicine and law.

It is essential in the first place that enough men of genuinely masculine attributes be attracted and held in the profession of public-school teaching to do away with the present characterization of the occupation as a distinctively feminine pursuit. It is essential also that the most promising of immature women teachers should be retained in the calling well beyond their years of immaturity. It is also the case that mature women teachers in a thoroughly efficient system of education would have something more to recommend them than mere maturity and a record of long years of service. As long as the ranks of teachers are filled largely by immature girls marking time until their marriage and elderly women who have failed of marriage, the situation is bound to be bad. There should be increased opportunity for capable young women to look ahead to both teaching as a career and marriage as a desirable social relationship without feeling the two ambitions to be incompatible. From the standpoint of the schools, the efficiency of the individual teacher should be so completely stressed that the matter of marriage or lack of marriage would be felt to be one of decided irrelevance. Such popular opposition as there may be to the employment of married women as teachers is very largely based upon the idea that, as women with husbands supposedly may look to their husbands as a means of support, they should leave the teaching jobs open to those who must earn their own support. It is obvious that the profession will be sadly lacking in prestige as long as efficiency in it is subordinated to the conception of it as a source of income for women who must work. Efficiency in medicine is highly enough prized so that no one suggests that the skillful surgeon should, upon acquiring a wealthy wife, give up his practice in order to make room in the profession for some ambitious young man in quest of the income to be derived therein. Women engaged in the practice of medicine, or in any of the fine arts such as music or the drama, are esteemed and their services paid for on the basis of their individual merits, without question as to their marital status. Teaching cannot pretend to so

high a rating in the social scheme of things until the degree of efficiency of the individual teacher is as seriously taken into account.

In an adequate national system of education the rural schools would be supplied with as good teachers as the urban. At present the urban teaching positions are in general preferred to the rural; thus there is a constant pressure of competition for the places in the cities. Salaries are higher in the city; living conditions are likely to be more attractive there; nearness to the theater and other urban agencies of culture and recreation is a matter of consequence to most teachers. Rural children, however, are in as great need of the best of teachers as are the urban, and the rural positions should be made attractive enough through the raising of salaries and in other ways in order that the schools attended mainly by farm-born children should not be considered, as they are today, undesirable by teachers in general. If salaries, buildings and equipment, and living conditions for teachers were equalized as between rural and urban communities, it is probable that the rural schools would attract and hold their fair share of the more competent teachers.

The proposal may not be so utterly fantastic as it will seem to some that teachers should be required to give alternating periods of service to rural and urban schools in much the same way as naval officers alternate between fleet and shore duty. Possibly nothing would contribute more toward a mutual understanding of farmers and others than such a movement of teachers from one type of community to the other. If service to the individual pupil and to the larger society is to be considered the great function of our teaching force rather than service primarily to a special type of community as such, then much is to be said for such a plan. The ideal teacher in such an arrangement would be one characterized by such fine adaptability and such a breadth of culture that one would never think of applying to him or her such terms as "country minded" or "urban minded."

Avenues of Progress for Rural Schools

However great may be the value of speculations upon the nature of an ideal educational system, which may possibly at some future date be approximated, there is an ever-present need for careful thought directed toward the solution of the immediate problems faced by rural schools. The best schools are in the cities. Comparisons are bound to be more frequently made between these better schools and the traditional single-room, poorly equipped buildings in the country, each accommodating a small number of pupils differing among themselves greatly in age, mental ability, and academic advancement, and being conducted very largely by immature, inexperienced, and unsupervised teachers. Obviously the gap in efficiency between rural schools at their worst and city schools at their best cannot be closed at a single bound. In general,

the immediate problem faced by the rural school is its improvement to the extent possible along lines already developed in the city schools—which does not necessarily imply an exact copying of the city by the country. Progress will be as rapid as an organized public opinion backed by adequate financial resources makes possible. As remarked earlier in the chapter, the development of a progressive public opinion and the provision of necessary funds are both dependent in rural communities in general upon leadership and aid largely emanating from urban centers. A sharp division of the state into two separate parts, rural and urban, each part to develop its own ideals and raise its own money, is bound to result in rural educational institutions of decided inferiority to those of the cities, with a consequent inferior preparation of country children for meeting the complex problems of modern life.

1. Enlarged Units of Administration.—One of the more obvious needs of rural schools is the enlargement of the unit of administration. Traditionally, American agricultural life is a matter of small units. With the coming of improved means of communication and transportation, the small district unit of control, with several in a single township, is increasingly being felt to be hopelessly inadequate. This is true whether one be considering the building and maintenance of roads or the building and maintenance of schoolhouses and the education of children therein. Enlarging the unit of administration aids in the development of uniform standards for a larger area or a larger section of population, which is much to be desired in this new day of an increasingly widened range of contacts and association. It also tends toward the selection of more competent board members, thus making for efficiency. A school board of five or seven members selected from among the residents of a township or of an entire county could in general be expected to average much higher in both educational ideals and administrative ability than would be the case with the members of small district boards. In the larger unit, every bit of local educational leadership may be brought to bear upon the situation affecting the whole of the township or county instead of being spent exclusively within a more narrowly circumscribed area.

If each voting precinct within a city should be constituted the urban unit of school administration, electing its own board of education from its residents and conducting its own schools on the basis of its own ideals and its own ability to pay, the urban educational situation would become somewhat like that to be found generally in the country districts. Such a change would be an unthinkable step backwards in city school efficiency. It is of course true that country children stand in as great need of the educational benefits to be derived from large-unit organization of their schools as do the children of the cities.

The county is none too large to serve as a unit of school administration. Township units are undoubtedly much to be preferred to a system

of smaller districts but, where the township is the unit, rural educational progress quite surely calls for agitation for a change to the county system. The factors that make desirable a change from the small district unit to one that is larger make it desirable as well that the larger unit shall have sufficient size to make possible the securing of the maximum benefits to be obtained through large-unit control. Counties can obviously afford to employ more competent superintendents than could be secured by townships. In the county unit, buildings are likely to be located more satisfactorily than is oftentimes possible in township districts. Rural pupils should have easy access to high school facilities, which many townships would find impossible to provide, owing to lack of sufficient school population and a sufficiently large amount of taxable property. In addition to these advantages going with large-unit organization, there are others which are quite sure to suggest themselves to any thoughtful person who has begun to compare the efficiency of a modern urban educational system with that of a small-unit arrangement traditional with the country schools.

2. Improved County Administration.—A second avenue of progress for rural schools lies in the direction of increasing ability, responsibility, and prestige of the county administrative officer. In all of the states excepting Michigan, in which the county administrative officer holds the title of "county commissioner of schools," he is known as "superintendent." In twenty states the official title is "county superintendent of schools." Elsewhere occur slight variations of this designation, such as "county superintendent," "county superintendent of education," "county school superintendent," and "county superintendent of public instruction." In other words, the rural school administrative officer has as high-sounding a title as that held by the head of the city school system. The similarity between the two, however, goes little further than that.

The fundamental deficiency in the case of the county superintendent of schools lies in the fact that, in general, the county is not an administrative unit. Where the small district is a unit, the county superintendent, notwithstanding his title, is little more than an advisory officer, whose advice may or may not be taken by any district board, as the latter sees fit. Thus no matter how well qualified and how willing he may be to exercise qualities of leadership in the educational field, the district boards may cut their districts off pretty completely from the possibility of profiting by this leadership. If the board members are in office, as is often the case, primarily because of their lack of vision, they are likely to resist any influences in the direction of educational progress. For example, in certain cases where supervising teachers are employed by a county to serve under the direction of the county superintendent, district boards have refused to avail themselves of the benefits of this aid to their

local teachers, in spite of the fact that the proffered aid would have cost their districts nothing.

It is clear that the greatest gain to the county superintendency can come only through the organization of the county as the administrative unit. The county board of education will appoint a superintendent of schools whose relation to the board, upon the one hand, and to the teachers, upon the other, will be not unlike that of city superintendents to city boards of education and city teachers. Certain gains, however, may be made in the direction of enhancing the importance of the county superintendent without going all of the way in the abolition of small districts in favor of a county-unit organization. It is quite likely that every such gain that is made in any county may be leading the way toward the development of full-fledged centralized organization in that county.

One much to be desired advance as concerns the county superintendent lies in the direction of a higher salary level. In 1926–1927, the median salary of city superintendents whose supervisory territory consisted of the smaller cities, those with populations of from 2,500 to 5,000, was $3,380. County superintendents holding office in population groups of like size received a median salary of $1,500.[1] Larger population groups, both urban and rural, pay their superintendents correspondingly higher salaries but, whatever the size of the supervisory territory, the median salary of rural superintendents was approximately no more than half as high as that of the superintendents of city schools.

It is probable that increasing the salaries paid to county superintendents will attract to the positions better-qualified individuals. Even if the position is one of relatively little authority, affording the holder the opportunity to do no more than proffer advice, the more capable the holder of the office chances to be, other things being equal, the more beneficial his influence is likely to be on the schools of his county. Little satisfaction is to be derived from the fact that salaries are somewhat higher at the present time than they were 10 years ago. Real progress in this matter will be shown only through a lessening of the disparity between the salaries of county and city superintendents. Whatever the absolute height of the salary levels, as long as the city administrative positions pay much better than those in the rural counties, the former will attract the more competent individuals who desire positions of an administrative nature.

A second important development as regards the office of county superintendent consists in its removal from the field of politics in those states in which it is an elective office. In twenty-five of the states,

[1] Cook, Catherine M., "Salaries and Certain Legal Provisions Relating to the County School Superintendency in the United States," *Rural School Leaflet* 44, Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, March, 1929.

one wishing to become a rural school administrative officer must be a resident of the county he desires to serve and must compete for the votes of the people in the primaries and general elections against such other candidates as there may be.[1] In such a situation, considerations of relative competency in the field of school administration are bound to be subordinated to political considerations. In a strongly Republican county, an unusually well-qualified Democrat might be rejected in favor of a Republican who could barely meet the minimum educational and experience qualifications prescribed by statute, and *vice versa*. There is no reason to suppose that the process of popular election, involving whatever it may in the way of hand shaking and baby kissing, can result in the selection of competent school administrators any more than it would in the selection of well-qualified city superintendents or presidents of state universities. The process of popular voting has its uses in a democracy, but it is very definitely unsuited to the business of the selection of technical experts; and school administration, rural as well as urban, needs the services of the trained expert.

In about half of the states, twenty-three out of forty-eight, the rural superintendent is appointed. In Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, and Utah, the appointing body is a county board of education. In Maine and Massachusetts, the appointment is by town school committees. In Connecticut, Delaware, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Vermont, and Virginia, the state board of education or the state commissioner appoints the county superintendents. Other machinery for appointment is maintained in New York, Indiana, Iowa, Tennessee, and Rhode Island, each state having a system peculiar to itself.

Unless the appointing body is responsible for the administration of the system for which it has selected a superintendent, appointment may have comparatively little advantage over the method of selection by popular election. If the appointing body may be held accountable for the efficiency of the educational system, as is the case with city schools, that body has every reason to select their superintendents with great care. Such is the case with some of the selecting boards who appoint rural superintendents, but not with most of them.

Another important line of advance in the direction of increased significance in the office of county superintendent consists in elevating the minimum qualifications imposed by statute in the various states. Where the county-unit system is in existence, an appointment is by a responsible county board of education and, even in the absence of the county system in those cases where the appointing body has some compelling motive to seek for the highest degree of competence obtainable in the superintendents appointed, it is to be expected that the candidates selected

[1] *Ibid.*

will be much better qualified than is demanded by statutory requirements. Where, however, selection is by popular election, as is usually the case, statutory statements of minimum qualifications become exceedingly important. In general, it is not even required that the superintendent shall have completed a four-year college course. With the minimum standard of requirements tending to define the maximum standard of attainment, the minimum standards should be pushed upward in most of the states. With the elevation of standards of education qualifications, will quite naturally be required an elevation of salary levels. It is probable that rural school administrators are, in general, at the present time fully as well qualified for the performance of their duties as the salaries paid would lead one to expect.

While the elevation of statutory requirements would seem in itself to be desirable, the full value to be derived from this process cannot be realized unless it is accompanied by the development of more satisfactory conditions than generally prevail as regards methods of selection and scope of administrative authority. Assuming that country children stand in as great need of capably administered educational facilities as do those of the cities, there will remain a challenging task for those people who are interested in these matters until the rural-urban gap in the matter of administrative efficiency is closed.

3. Lengthening of School Year.—Another important difference between country and city schools consists in the fact that the average length of the year in the small rural one-room schools is approximately one-sixth shorter than is the case in the cities. At the present time, the average number of days in the school year of one-room schools is in the neighborhood of 150, while the city average is rather more than 180. Even were the two systems, rural and urban, equally efficient as far as they go, the rural child would be left at a disadvantage when compared with the urban due to the fact that he would be spending considerably less time each year with educational interests. On several counts the rural schools are less efficient than those of the cities. One of the more obvious ways in which to improve the rural educational system is through a lengthening of the year. If seven or eight months in school each year is to be desired for the farm child, nine months is still more to be desired.

In those districts in which interest in things educational is at low ebb or entirely lacking, it is to be expected that the length of the school year will approach the legal minimum. A short year is obviously less expensive than one that is longer. Fewer months of salary will need to be paid for the teaching. The average monthly salary is lower in such schools, owing to the fact that those teachers who are capable of securing the better monthly salaries are quite certain to prefer positions in schools of higher standards as regards length of year. It is to be expected, too, that boards desirous of cutting expenses by providing

for a short year will also desire to cut still further by securing low-priced teachers. The short year is also felt to be of advantage by those farmer parents who think of school as an undesirable interruption of the occupational activities of their children. By such parents, the short year is seen as a double economic advantage; their taxes are lower, and they secure more days of work from their boys and girls.

The county-unit system, adopted only in part, will tend to bring about a uniform length of school year for the whole area by forcing the more backward communities into line. Well-qualified county superintendents, even in those counties not organized as educational units, are likely to be able to accomplish something towards the same desirable end.

4. Extension of Consolidation.—Earlier in this chapter, the consolidated school was considered. Certain of its advantages over the one-room school were enumerated, and certain difficulties in the way of its general adoption. There seems little reason to doubt that one of the chief deficiencies in the rural educational system as compared with the urban consists in the fact that country children, where consolidation is lacking, are deprived of the various advantages that cannot be afforded them in the one-room buildings traditional in country districts. One important avenue of progress for rural schools lies in the direction of their increasing consolidation. In those counties in which the responsibility for the administration of the educational system is centralized in a single board, the likelihood of the rapid development of consolidation is greatest. Large-unit control and small-unit operation do not go at all naturally together. The small-unit school is fully as much out of harmony with the prevailing tendencies of modern life as is the small-district administration of education. If the county board of education is thinking in terms of efficiency in the educational process, it will as a matter of course plan for the grouping of pupils in relatively large buildings so distributed about the county as to give the maximum amount of advantage to the greatest number of families to be served. The problem of the county board in this regard will be essentially the same as that of the city board of education. With a reasonably good quality of vision in educational matters and availability of funds sufficient for the purpose, consolidation will quite naturally develop as one means of closing the gap in matters educational between country and city.

The above is not to be taken to mean that in an ideal handling of the rural school situation no single-room buildings would have a place; the opposite is undoubtedly true. In certain parts of the country, geographical conditions are such as to constitute the one-room school the most effective agency for ministering to rural children.[1] What we should

[1] ABEL, JAMES F., "Recent Data on Consolidation of Schools and Transportation of Pupils," *Bulletin* 22, Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C., 1925.

desire is that single-room schools that are retained should be kept because they are actually the most useful type of school, as determined by as completely accurate methods of determination as are available. In the vast majority of cases, the 160,000 or so one-room, one-teacher institutions still in existence in the United States are kept because of traditional reasons, the efficiency issue never having been squarely faced in any scientific way by those responsible for their continuance. It should go without saying that those small-unit schools which are retained should be made as effective as possible. In the general advance of the consolidation process, those children who, because of their relative isolation, are forced to attend small schools should not for that reason be forgotten by administrative authorities. As far as possible the handicap of isolation should be reduced by the provision of as modern educative equipment as may be provided in one-room schools.

While county-unit administration of schools is likely to hasten the development of consolidation, the latter need not wait for the formation of county-wide administrative units. Where small district units prevail, it is possible for several adjacent districts to vote away their district boundary lines organizing themselves into a unit large enough to support a modern consolidated school, thus securing for themselves its advantages. A large proportion of the consolidated schools already formed were brought into existence by the union of outlying districts with a small town system. In others, all of the districts uniting were located in the open country. In the opinion of some rural sociologists, among whom should be mentioned Prof. Augustus W. Hayes, consolidation should never be forced upon local small-unit districts by county or other higher-up authorities, the idea being that social values associated with the school will be more effectively developed and conserved if the grouping be entirely a matter of voluntary action upon the part of the small districts, with only suggestions and advice from outside.[1] The author's own belief is that the benefits to the children to be derived from consolidation are great enough to justify the use of authority from above to hasten the process in the case of the more backward districts. The drawing of district lines, however, should be done with great care, those responsible for the task bearing constantly in mind the social as well as the more narrowly educational aspects of the matter. While it is true that a naturally developed grouping of rural population into enlarged communities is favorable to the establishment of successfully organized consolidated schools, it is also true that a new and valuable sense of community may *follow* a wise locating of enlarged district boundary lines.

5. Improvement in Quality of Teachers.—Improvement in the quality of the teachers employed by rural schools is a most important need of

[1] HAYES, AUGUSTUS W., *Rural Sociology*, p. 359, Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1929.

rural education. The significance to the child of the difference between an excellent teacher and a poorer one is greater to him than that of the size of the administrative unit, or the extent of authority of the county administrator, or the length of the school year, or even the size and equipment of the school building in which he prepares and recites his lesson. The chief gain to be hoped for through development in the various fields discussed is that through such development better teachers may be secured and retained and enabled to function most effectively.

In the past, rural schools have been poorly taught in large part because of the very general movement away from them of the better-qualified teachers who were attracted to city positions. At the present time, the movement of teachers with rural experience to city schools is slowing down. There is an oversupply of teachers. Relatively fewer new ones are needed annually by the cities now because, in the first place, the urban school population is increasing less rapidly than it was formerly and, in the second place, because, at least temporarily, the proportion of city teachers who vacate their places each year is declining. Since there is a lessened opportunity for inexperienced teachers or for those with only rural experience to secure positions in the city schools, country schools will be more readily able to secure well-qualified teachers than has been the case heretofore. Large numbers of young men and women who, under the conditions prevailing a very few years ago, could reasonably have expected to secure city positions are at the present time filing their applications for places even in one-room schools. In other words, general social conditions which have every appearance of being at least relatively permanent are operating towards an equalization of the *supply* of competent teachers as between city and country. For the sake of rural schools, it is much to be desired that the *demand* for good teachers shall become more of a positive factor than has hitherto been the case; that the well-qualified person who aspires to a city position but is forced to accept a place in a country school shall not have too great reason for disappointment. Movements in the direction of higher salary schedules, improved facilities for carrying on the work of instruction such as consolidation of schools with its opportunity for specialization, and the increasing use of supervisors to work especially with relatively inexperienced teachers are movements in the direction of modernizing the conditions under which rural teachers must work. All this is bound to increase their self-respect and effectiveness, thus tending to close the undesirable gap separating rural education from urban.

CHAPTER XV

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The motives prompting the appropriation of large amounts of public money for vocational education in agriculture may be thought of as two. In the first place, there is the feeling that farmers' sons who have chosen the fathers' occupation, or who simply as a matter of course are to remain in it, should be given a preparation in the schools which will make them more efficient than they would otherwise be. As efficiency in agriculture is a matter of national concern, the spending of federal money to pay for increased efficiency is felt to be justifiable. The second motive is to stimulate such an interest in farming among the children of farmers that they will be less likely than they would otherwise be to choose another occupation. It is but reasonable to suppose that the latter of these two motives was the really determining force back of the inception of the plan. If farmers had not been complaining that their children were getting away from the farm, if, further, the cry "How shall we keep the boy on the farm?" had not been taken up by the editors of agricultural journals and by members of Congress representing agricultural districts, there would undoubtedly have been no such appropriation.

Influence of the Family-farm Institution

The family-farm system works well only in case it is very largely self-perpetuating. This self-perpetuation took care of itself in a natural way before the day of the newer means of communication. With the new communication came increased migration of the young from the farms to the city. This led to rural discontent which found expression in the cry that something should be done to check the urban-ward flow. Vocational agricultural education in the public schools, aided by federal subsidy, came as a part of the program to check the migration of farm-born young men to the cities. It may be thought of as an effort to give support to the family-farm system at a time when it began to show signs of decreasing self-sufficiency. The family-farm institution by its very nature must stress family solidarity as opposed to individuality and choice. To say this is not necessarily to condemn it. One may argue that the end justifies the means. If one does so argue and if he begins his reasoning with the assumption that, upon the whole, it is better for the nation that agriculture should be carried on through a system of family-farms than otherwise, then he is logically prepared to favor the

various plans which have been brought into operation to subordinate the principle of full development of individuality and choice as applied to farm-born young people to the one of family occupational solidarity.

The school is the most influential social agency. It may become under skillful administration a powerful instrumentality for the development of its pupils into well-rounded personalities equipped with much knowledge of their own natures and of the great and complex world into which they are to graduate—thus able to choose somewhat wisely the places in life which they will attempt to occupy. It may, upon the other hand, so skillfully manipulate the conditions of choice of those under its charge in the direction of a single occupation and type of life as to make impossible anything like a well-rounded development with its essential accompaniment of a large measure of real freedom of choice.

It is not surprising that the family-farm institution has exerted much influence in the direction of the development of the second sort of program for rural high schools. Nor is it surprising that it should have succeeded to a large extent in giving the teachers whom it employs, even those who are not employed to teach agriculture, a distinctively vocational bias in their attitudes and influence. Teachers in rural schools are subjected not only to the direct influence of the agricultural community in which they work but indirectly to family-farm influence as this finds expression through rural leaders of national prominence. Books which these teachers read are well filled with statements such as the following:

> To delay the teaching of agriculture until the high-school years would be to lose its most strategic value. It should be a regular course in all rural schools, beginning before the natural rural interests have been turned to discontent.[1]

The meaning of the statement above, which may be taken as typical of much that has been written and said in the last three decades, is perfectly clear. The child's self as an individual is to be subordinated to his self as a member of the family-farm system. Strategy is to be used to hold him to the system. This strategy consists of catching him when very young and filling his mind so full of occupational interests that he will have no curiosity as to the possibilities of life outside the parental occupation and the home community. Such statements are the natural expression of the family-farm institution fighting for its very life. The fight has been carried on so vigorously and with such a measure of success that an attitude has been developed among educators which often results in farm-ward pressure upon farm-born young people, even in cases where the farmer parents are anxious for their children to get into some other occupation.

[1] Fiske, G. W., *The Challenge of the Country*, p. 163, Association Press, New York, 1912.

Attitudes of School Administrators

During the 1927 summer session of the University of Michigan approximately fifty school superintendents and high-school principals who were in attendance were interviewed to ascertain their attitudes regarding this matter. Some of these men were serving in schools in fairly large cities, but all of them had pupils from the farms. These men were asked two questions: (1) Does your school exert pressure upon the pupils from the farms to induce them to enroll in the classes in agriculture? (2) Do you think the schools should attempt to send the farm-born pupils back to the farm after their graduation? The men interviewed were fairly evenly divided in their attitudes as indicated by the answers given.

Following are the answers given by some of the men who answered affirmatively, with some added comments by the author:

Superintendent in town of 7,000:

> We must have farmers. Children seem to have a tendency to get away which should be counteracted. The schools should bring pressure to bear on farm children to stay in the occupation. Our agriculture teacher visits in the homes and interviews eighth-graders. He has to work to fill his classes.

This man gave no indication whatever that he had ever considered that the agricultural occupation might be carried on by persons who were not the children of farmers.

Principal of high school of 1,600 with 200 in agricultural classes:

> Schools should bring pressure to bear. Life is easier on the farm than in the city. The courses in agriculture are theoretically elective, but practically not. Our agriculture teacher is given a free hand to fill his classes. We insist that the farm child shall pursue the agriculture course during the first year and at least some of it during the second year. The freshmen take just what we tell them to take, and we tell those from the farm to take agriculture. [In answer to a question] Yes, the temptation is always present to use the individual child to maintain the system. We figure that we are getting a good teacher for $1,500.

The first two sentences in this answer can undoubtedly be best understood as a rationalization based on the attitude expressed in the remainder of the statement. It is very likely true that the son of a successful farmer will have an easier life, at least psychically, if he fits himself into the family groove, instead of stepping out for himself to fight his way to whatever sort of individual success he may achieve in the competitive world of modern life. Since when, however, have the official leaders and advisors of American young men and women called out to them to pick the easy paths? This man's answer can presumably be best understood if one reads it backwards. Through the Smith-Hughes plan, a teacher

whose total salary was perhaps $2,500 or more could be kept on the staff at an outlay by the district of only $1,500. In order to keep this teacher, however, and to see that he carried his share of the teaching load, the agriculture courses were made compulsory for farm freshmen, and in part for the sophomores. Just how sincerely the principal felt that this course of action was actually best for the farm-born children in that it was a preparation for an easy life for them after graduation one cannot be certain. It is quite safe to assume, however, that he did not advocate ease of life as the ideal program for the general run of pupils under his direction.

Principal in town of 7,000:

> Our agriculture teacher is the best-paid man of the staff (due to federal subsidy), but if no pressure were brought to bear, he would have no more than a tenth as many students as the other teachers. Our proposed load for a teacher is 150, six classes of 25 each. After all possible pressure is exerted, our Smith-Hughes man has but 80 or so. I have sent as many as three teachers to urge the freshmen to take the agricultural courses. Farm children taking botany are placed in "agricultural botany" without question. The parents generally wish their children to get into something else, quite largely into teaching. We have in mind the system rather than the child, and this attitude is general.

The above statement is admirably straightforward and frank. This man is very definitely working for a school board who expect him to do what he can to provide pupils for an agricultural teacher in order that the district may financially benefit from the federal subsidy provided in part payment for such a teacher. The situation illustrates how a system developed presumably to quiet the discontent of the farming population may be used to defeat the present desire of the farming people of a given community.

Superintendent in town of 1,200:

> The school owes a responsibility to make the community self-perpetuating. Our agricultural courses are more advertised than the others. The school should advise but not urge. At first we urged, but now we just have friendly talks with the boys.

Just where the line should be drawn between the urging of a boy to become a farmer and the having of a friendly talk with him by an influential man who feels a responsibility for making the farming community self-perpetuating is not very clear. In either case, such a man is not entirely free to consider the boy on his own merits simply as a young American getting ready to become a man in a great and complex social order. He must consider his pupil primarily as a part of an occupational institution which should be protected from depletion.

Superintendent in town of 1,250:

> Most farm children do not want to go back to the farm, and their parents do not wish them to. This prejudice against farming should be opposed by the school. Pressure is needed to induce *farm* children to take agriculture. About 40 per cent of those in the courses are town boys who select the department as a "pipe."

One important factor in making the agriculture department relatively easy is the fact that no work in foreign language is required. Many boys and girls from the farms who are entering the town high school are in a frame of mind to attempt something difficult. They are, in a way, leaving home for the first time, stepping out into the larger world and looking upon a high school education as a challenge. They do not ask for something easy. And a fair proportion of these young people are able to handle the more difficult high school subjects, including foreign languages, in a creditable manner. As they are from the farms, however, this school, along with many others, tells them that they should not think of selecting the more difficult courses but rather the ones taken by those town children who are looking for an easy way through school.

Superintendent in town of 1,000:

> One of outstanding ability, I should not advise to go back to the farm. An ordinary person would be more content on a farm than in a profession.

There are certainly many reasonably contented persons in all of the professions, and there are just as certainly in these days a great many discontented ordinary persons on farms. And, too, farming and professional life are not the only alternatives for the farm-born boy.

Superintendent in town of 1,000:

> In a good agricultural community, the boy should be urged to remain on the farm. The best blood should be sent back to the farm.

This statement stands in interesting contrast to the one just preceding. One man would send the best blood back, while the other would send back everything but the best. Neither would give the farm boy anything like a free opportunity to decide for himself.

Those who begin their thinking with the family-farm institution rather than with the individual child in quest of an education will find themselves in sympathy with the general attitude expressed by the school administrators just quoted. Those who place the individual aspect of life first and think of institutions—occupational, educational, and all the rest—as a means to an end will find themselves just as completely out of sympathy with the attitudes voiced in the same quoted statements. It may be that the proper function of a textbook in rural

sociology is but to describe and interpret. If this be the case, however, few, if any, of such books have been limited to their proper function. If the author is really interested in the thing of which he writes and if in his living he has evolved for himself something in the way of an organized scale of values, he will hardly succeed in keeping out of his book all indication of what his personal scale of values happens to be. It must be a most unusual book of science that does not have in it something of philosophy. The social scientist, at any rate, would have a difficult time in excluding all evidence of personal feeling from his volume. The most that should be asked of him in this regard is that he should be reasonably considerate of those who, because of different experiences and training, have scales of values that differ from his own.

The following are sample statements of administrators who answered the two questions in the negative:

"It is not desirable to send the young people back to the farms. They should make their own choices."

"We have no agricultural course. Most people are having a difficult time to keep their agricultural courses going. It is too much trouble. The better students, at least, should be urged to do something else."

"Our agricultural course has been discontinued. Pressure was formerly used, but the pupils simply did not want that work. The school has no business urging a boy to follow the occupation of his father."

"Our Smith-Hughes classes are filled easily. There is no justification in the use of pressure."

"Our agricultural man has been criticised for not pushing his work. There is decreasing interest in the department. No pressure should be exerted. The course should be kept strictly elective."

"The people in the country feel that pressure should be used to send the boys back to the farm. Those in the town do not. No such pressure is used. Our Smith-Hughes classes are small."

"While the advertising of the school is largely through the agricultural department, no pressure is exerted to get the children into the courses. The school should not use its influence to get boys back onto the farm."

"Those who get to high school have already broken from the farm, and they don't want to study agriculture. We do not offer it."

Administration of the Smith-Hughes Plan

Vocational agriculture under federal subsidy is interesting to consider as an agency for determining the choices of farm-born boys. One should realize that the system does two things. In the first place, it provides vocational training in agriculture for certain young people who wish it, just as the commercial department in many high schools provides training in business. In the second place, it modifies the conditions of choice

of many farm-born young people and their parents to the end that they are made to choose it. In part, the activities of those who are responsible for administering the system to secure the second result are actuated by a sincere belief that farm-born children should wish to remain on farms and, if they do not wish to do so without coercion, that coercion is justified in the attempt to develop such a wish. In part, the administrators of the system are simply actuated by the desire to make good as parts of the system in order that they may keep their jobs, secure promotion, and the like.

The teachers of vocational agriculture under the Smith-Hughes system are, in general, capable and ambitious young men. They have prepared for the vocation by completing a certain prescribed course of study. They must have been approved by the state supervisor of vocational agricultural training in order to secure appointment. They are energetically making their way to success in their calling, naturally desirous of securing promotion as soon as it may be obtained. Promotion, as well as appointment, being quite largely in the hands of the state supervisor, the latter individual is able to secure a high degree of cooperation from the teachers. As the state supervisor also determines which schools shall be provided with agricultural teachers under the Smith-Hughes plan of federal subsidy, he is able to secure cooperation from school boards and superintendents.

The Smith-Hughes teacher is engaged for the entire 12 months of the year. It is to his interest to be known as a good community man. He visits country schools, giving talks to them. He visits in the farm homes to interview children who are completing the eighth grade in the country school and their parents. He addresses farm organizations. The farming people and their children are likely to be better acquainted with the teacher of vocational agriculture than with anybody else on the high school staff. When they think of the school, he is the man they are pretty sure to think of. When the children arrive in town at the beginning of the school year, it is not at all strange if he is the man they are most anxious to see. In certain cases, no other teacher is allowed to be in the room where the children from the farms are selecting their courses. The teacher "is given a free hand to fill his classes," in the words of one of the administrators quoted. Sometimes all of this is not sufficient, and the administrator feels it necessary to detail other teachers to use their powers of persuasion upon the more or less confused youngsters from the farms to get them into the classes in agriculture. Sometimes administration goes even further with the coercing process and makes the classes actually "required" rather than elective for the freshmen from the farms.

A part of the work in vocational agriculture consists of home projects. The project is an assignment of practical, or laboratory, work

carried out on the farm. It may consist, for example, in the growing of a certain crop—potatoes, beans, corn, wheat, or something else—or in the raising of certain farm animals—sheep, swine, or dairy cattle. The student is said to be engaged on a potato project or a sheep project. This practical work is carried out under the supervision of the agriculture teacher. The boy actually learns by doing, which is most admirable, surely, for one who is to be a farmer, as well as for those who are to become doctors or dentists. At least sometimes, however, the project is thought of very definitely as a device for "anchoring the boy to the farm," to use an expression that is more or less familiar to those who are responsible for the supervision of such work. The long-time project is favored by many for the reason that it leads the pupil deeper and deeper into the business of farming. As one writer puts it,

> The calf project for the seventh-grade boy becomes a heifer project for the eighth-grade boy, a cow and calf project for the ninth-grade vocational boy, and a dairy or beef-herd project for the twelfth-grade vocational boy.

One must admit that the process seems perfectly sound psychologically. The program, however, is precisely the reverse of that which has been developed for junior high schools (seventh, eighth, and ninth grades). Those who direct the policies of the junior high school speak of its function as being largely exploratory. It is felt that if the seventh-grade city boy feels that he is very much interested in some one trade he should be required to learn something of other trades before being allowed to choose. If the seventh-grade country boy, upon the other hand, is interested in farming, the idea is not to disturb him but, if possible, to deepen that interest; and if he is not interested in farming, the idea is, if possible, to awaken an interest by getting him to join a vocational club. The city educational system does what it can for the individual, as an individual; the country educational system does what it can for the family-farm institution through coercion of the individual, which is a great deal especially in those communities provided with wide-awake agricultural teachers.

The teachers of vocational agriculture are supplied with various types of aid by their supervisors and other interested agencies. As an illustration of one sort of printed material which reaches them, the following parts of *A Farm Boy's Reverie* are quoted.[1]

A Farm Boy's Reverie

Why Should I Take Vocational Agriculture in High School?

1. Because—I am young, still growing, and the agricultural atmosphere is such as to promote continued growth.

[1] *Michigan Agricultural News Letter*, issued by Vocational Teacher Training, Michigan State College, November, 1928.

2. Because—To realize that I am growing is the greatest pleasure that I have. Then just for the sake of sheer joy I want to have the privilege of an agricultural life.

4. Because—The farm-bred men and women will be the leaders of the future in all lines of human endeavor. I should be a farm leader.

8. Because—The richness of life consists in the close personal friendships that we have with people who are really worth while. There are no friendships which are so genuine and so unselfish as the friendships formed on the farm and in the school.

12. Because—I wish to serve in the field of endeavor that will cause me to lead a clean, industrious, and happy life.

Why Should I Farm?

1. Because—Farming is the greatest agency by which to improve the world. I would like to have a part in making a better world.

3. Because—The work of the farmer is endless in its influence, going on from generation to generation. I would like to guarantee my own continuity through this sort of service.

4. Because—The farmer always has the privilege of working with the Divine Laws and thereby may preserve his own sterling qualities of character. Here is a source from which I may draw such fibers of moral strength.

5. Because—The farmer must be, and is, a respected member of society. As a farmer I can have what money cannot buy but what true worth is going to win.

7. Because—I can continue to study and thereby extend my education and influence in my neighborhood. A true farmer is ever alert and studious.

8. Because—Through farming I can learn the intricacies of nature and the wonders of life. This is a prerequisite for good living.

10. Because—Even though I may not desire farming as a life work, I know that it is one of the most fruitful gateways to success in other lines of endeavor. Many of our most successful leaders owe much to the farming profession, and future generations will be supported by the work of this profession. Farming is an honorable and reliable profession; it is such that I seek.

The obvious purpose of the above statements is propagandic. It is just as truly propaganda as the radio advertising of different brands of tooth paste or of cigarettes. Those who feel that the matter of supreme importance to the rural community is the checking of the flow of young people to occupations other than farming will favor the issuance of such literature, provided they think it may be effective. Those who feel that a matter of much greater importance is the guarding of the personalities of young people, whether rural or urban, against influences that tend to narrow the sympathies and render almost impossible a sane, well-balanced attitude toward life will oppose the work of propagandists. Some of the latter will feel that society owes it to any farmer lad who gives indications of experiencing reveries or daydreams of the sort indicated to attempt to awaken him from such dreaming to the

realities of the world as it is. Much may be said for the belief that the school should be an educational institution, giving all of those in its charge as true a picture of life as it can present.

Vocational students in agriculture may be entitled to the truth. In regard to some of the points touched in *A Farm Boy's Reverie,* the following is suggested as being the truth:

1. Continued mental growth is possible in the agricultural atmosphere, but it is more difficult of achievement there than in many other walks of life.

2. To experience the sheer joy of continued mental and spiritual growth should be of greater concern to the individual than his choice of an occupation. Men and women in various occupations experience this full development as they live their daily lives. Unless the young person has reason to believe that his best chance of experiencing it is in the occupation of farming, he should carefully consider other possibilities in the way of a life work.

3. Farm-bred men and women have occupied places of leadership in all lines of human endeavor. The farm, however, in general, has fallen below both the city and the small town in this regard. Conspicuous distinction is naturally very rare; the chances are very much against any given young person achieving it. Each should serve society with whatever ability he has, and in whatever field he feels best suits his individual nature, achieving such a measure of leadership as he may be able to win fairly in the increasingly keen competitive struggle of life.

4. Life is indeed a hard and impoverished existence for those who lack close personal relations with people who are worth while. No occupation or type of community has a monopoly on friendship. Men and women are to be found everywhere in life who number among their choicest possessions the sincere unselfish friendship of a devoted circle of intimates. It is just as true that everywhere in life, including the farm, those are to be found who lack such friendships. One peculiar danger of the farm, in this regard, is that family solidarity may prevent the individual from standing enough alone to have the opportunity to develop close individual friendships. There is a danger that friendships may be mainly of family with family and therefore a bit diluted and thin as far as the individual is concerned.

5. No field of endeavor as such can cause one to lead a clean, industrious, or happy life. Few, if any, fields of endeavor, upon the other hand, prevent one from living cleanly, industriously, and happily. The quality of one's life is largely what one makes it. Because of individual differences, any given individual would be likely to be more industrious and happy in certain vocations than in others. Therefore each should choose with care, if possible availing himself of the advice of at least one impartial and widely experienced friend.

6. Each should seek to leave the world a little better and a little finer for having lived. The world is full of a great variety of avenues of service. Which one each individual chooses for himself should be well suited to his particular nature; and having chosen, he should refrain from attempting to belittle the choices made by others who may be as fine and as idealistic as himself.

7. The work of no one ceases with his death. Whatever each achieves of good or evil lives forever in a social immortality. The individual's continuity is guaranteed, whether one would have it so or not; and this is true wherever one may live and whatever may be the nature of his vocation.

8. One may think of nature as conforming to Divine Laws. If one thinks in these terms, however, one must not forget that man is the supreme product of nature. If one be inclined to interpret life in terms of divinity, he may be able to see fully as much of it in the cities as on the farms. The hand of God may be as truly observed in the surgeon's operating room as in the forests and the fields.

9. The respect accorded to any individual is a matter of social evaluation, and society in general does not give farmers as a group any higher rating in the scale than it gives to men in other occupations. Every rural community has its highly respected farmers, and some of these individuals have been able to win the respect and admiration of a wider circle of society than that of the local community in which they reside.

10. Most farmers are no more especially alert or studious than are most people engaged in the various other activities of life. The person who combines alertness with a studious nature is likely to win preference in any field of activity, including that of agriculture.

11. Most farmers know little of the intricacies of nature and the wonders of life. The type of the individual's mind is a much more important essential to the acquirement of such knowledge and appreciation than is the particular job by which one makes his living.

12. Farming is not a profession. To many farmers it is not even a business but merely a means of livelihood. The great number of the latter determine the degree of social esteem and the quality of honor in general accorded to the occupation. Even rural sociologists are apt to compare the farmer's income, his standard of living, and the quality of his life with those of the laboring class of the cities rather than with those of the business class. It is only as the farmer is guided by the profit motive that he may be truly said to be conducting a business, and it is only when he succeeds in making a fair profit that he may be said to be a successful business man. The professional ideal is the ideal of service. Individual farmers who are more interested in building up a reputation for efficient service to humanity, through the distinctive quality of product that they are able to furnish, than in developing a reputation for being good business men, with service but a means to

the end of profits, may quite properly be said to be dominated by the professional ideal. Such men are very few, however, in any business, and there is no good reason for expecting the occupation of farming to lead other businesses in the march, if there be one, toward the ideal of professional service.

Those who are engaged in vocational education in agriculture are apparently trying to "sell" country life and the occupation of farming, from the same motives and with much the same technique as are characteristic of salesmen everywhere. The city is attacked, at least by implication, just as are competing makes of cars and razor blades, by men whose business is the "pushing" of a single line. Some men sincerely believe in the thing they are attempting to sell, others have merely learned their sales talk and could as easily change their apparent point of view as does a good radio announcer.

The path of promotion for the young and efficient teacher of agriculture is likely to carry him to a "combination job" in which he is both superintendent and teacher of agriculture and later to a position in which his duties are entirely administrative. In other words, the superintendents of many rural schools are men who have been thoroughly indoctrinated with the vocational point of view and are thus by training and experience well fitted to reinforce the vocationalizing influences of the agricultural department. This is just as it should be in the opinion of those who are primarily interested in checking the cityward drift. In the opinion of those others who are primarily interested in the school as an agency for the development of a broadly cultural point of view, with vocational training of every sort strictly subordinated to a larger, more human emphasis, it is all wrong. In the opinion of the latter people, the chief administrator of a school, whether the institution chances to be a small rural high school or a great university, should put foremost in his thinking the individual in quest of an education, rigorously suppressing the attempts of vocational enthusiasts who would "run away with the show."

A proper understanding of this whole matter is impossible for those who do not see family-farm life in its institutional aspects. It is not merely individual men, women, and children who are concerned. There is a continuing institution, a fairly definite organization of the public mind, made what it is at the present time through the powerful force of tradition coming down from the past. Individuals are born into this institution, and their hopes and ambitions, their standards of evaluation, and their prejudices are fixed by it. While it is subject to change, those nonconforming young people, through whom the change would necessarily come, are the ones most likely to leave the farm for life elsewhere. The institution is thus perpetuated by its strong and enthusiastic adherents and by individuals of a weaker nature who are easily held in line.

The people of the city are able to live a self-sufficient social life They, for the most part, even including those who have come to the cities from the farms, are little concerned with life in the rural districts in its educational aspects or otherwise. Even the most capable social thinkers of the city and those who by nature are most devoted to the various phases of social welfare are fully busy with matters closer at hand. Almost entirely the country is of interest to the city only as the source of not too high-priced foodstuffs and as a world of more or less natural beauty through which one may drive and in which one may spend his vacations.

The two worlds of country and city, while existing in increasingly close physical relationship with one another, thus live their distinct social lives, the country traditionally hostile to the city, the city, in its self-sufficiency, largely oblivious of the country. Between these two worlds exists an increasingly large number of maladjusted young people, born on farms, partly imbued with traditional family-farm ideas and standards, but only partially so, owing to the impact of suggestions having their origin in the city. These young men and women are very largely lacking the sort of aid to which troubled and confused youth would seem to be clearly entitled in a world of humanity and justice. Those who speak for the family-farm institution in any capacity are obviously not prepared to understand these "malcontents and rebels." The city, upon the other hand, is ignorant of their very existence, unless they present themselves at the employment offices asking for jobs. Such understanding assistance as they get while still on the farm in the task of organizing their unique selves for life must largely come from people who are neither "rural minded" nor "urban minded" but are more completely human minded than members of either of the two other classes could be. Sometimes ministers and teachers, at the risk of being considered insufficiently loyal to rural life, are willing and able to give the sort of non-institutionalized friendships and advice of which young people stand so much in need. Sometimes chance acquaintances are of much real assistance in this way. Very largely, however, aid of a broadly human sort does not come at all, at least at the time when it would mean most to the perplexed boy or girl on the farm. The need of settling themselves down to the serious business of making a living comes soon, and, for the most part, irregularities of thought and behavior are pretty completely smoothed away, the individual taking up the traditional way of life of the inherited institution. Those who are less pliable go almost entirely to swell the ranks of unskilled labor in the cities.

A Suggested Program

There seems to be good justification for the advocacy of a compromise program for the rural high school, as regards its emphasis upon vocational

education in agriculture. The family-farm institution must be taken account of as a very real factor in the situation. The individual child, also, and the principle of individual development and choice should be considered. Between the two extremes of an institutionalized program, upon the one hand, that would hold all farm-born young people to vocational training in agriculture except the few who are manifestly unfitted for the life of the farm, and of a program, upon the other hand, as completely fitted to the individual as are those of the best city schools, there may be a practicable halfway position.

Such a compromise program would be based upon the realization, in the first place, that a very large proportion of farm-born children will remain in the occupation; and, in the second place, that, according to various estimates, from 25 to 50 per cent of them must leave the occupation for places in the city. The school should be prepared to do the best it can for both those who go and those who remain. It also should bear some responsibility for aiding individuals to decide whether they are to be among those who go or those who remain.

The boys who are ready for high school, and who have rather definite ideas at that time of how they wish to spend their lives, may be thought of as divided roughly into five groups. They are only twelve or thirteen or fourteen years of age at that time, and it should not be assumed that they have arrived at any final conclusions, but many of them think they know what they wish to do when they become adults, their ideas having been largely formed under parental influence. The school must meet their minds right where their minds are at that time. The five groups are as follows: (1) those who expect to become farmers, but who wish to secure some high school education; (2) those who expect to become farmers and either do not like to attend school or see no advantage in further education as a preparation for farming; (3) those who have in mind a professional or business career and who wish to prepare for college in the completest sort of way; (4) those who intend to go to the city and wish to get some further education and training in preparation for taking better positions there than they would otherwise be able to secure; (5) those who wish to get as well-paid jobs as they can find in a city without spending any more time in school.

The vocational agricultural courses should be available for the first group, those who wish to attend high school before becoming farmers. Some of this group would naturally choose those courses; the others ought to be prevailed upon, if possible, to take at least some of them, on the ground that the better-trained farmer is likely to be the more successful one. The vocational program should not be too vigorously urged, however, upon every child who thinks he is going to be a farmer. The one who actually prefers to study a foreign language and to take more courses in English literature or history than he could get while taking

the full work of the agriculture department should have his chance. It would be unfortunate should the feeling come to prevail that as broad a cultural education as one may secure in high school does not go well with farming. While as complete an exploratory attitude cannot be taken by the rural school towards the boy who thinks he is interested mainly or entirely in training in vocational agriculture as may be taken by the city school towards its pupils, still the rural high school may be at least sympathetically inclined towards the boy who changes his mind.

The vocational-agriculture department should be successful in bringing into high school many of the second group mentioned above. Many who think they are not interested in school may be reached by the vocational appeal. Through vocational instruction these may be made more successful farmers than they would otherwise be, should they return to the farms. There is always a possibility that new lines of interest may develop in school and lead the individual to a more satisfactory life adjustment than he could otherwise achieve. While some would insist in their program of checking the urban migration—that it would be better for the farm boy who is contented with the farm to remain there without high school education than to come in contact with school influences that resulted in his leaving the farm—such an insistence would be most extreme in its caste emphasis.

Members of the third group, those who wish to prepare for college, should be offered encouragement by the school. It stands to reason that the sons of business and professional men, both because of their family background and because of access in general to better preparatory-school facilities, will, in general, have an advantage in the competition with the farmers' sons for admission to the professions such as law and medicine and to other fields of work dependent upon university training. The rural high school should do all that it can to facilitate the preparation of those relatively few sons of farmers who wish to try to travel the long hard road towards graduation from college and the professional school. They should be allowed, it would seem, to pursue academic subjects exclusively should they and their parents so desire. Colleges and universities are necessarily raising their entrance requirements and are quite surely going to look with less and less favor upon the presentation of vocational credit for admission. Apparently the part of wisdom is to allow and expect boys from the farms who have college aspirations to begin upon high school entrance the study of a foreign language rather than to attempt to get them into classes in vocational agriculture. Those who show themselves during the first year to be utterly incapable of preparation for college may later be directed into courses that will be of most use to them.

While it is desirable that the agricultural community shall retain or draw to itself men of good intellectual capacity who have had some

systematic training for the life they are to lead, it is equally desirable that this community shall be well represented in the world outside. If from 25 to 50 per cent of the boys born on the farms must leave them for activities of a different nature, it surely is to be desired that as many as possible of these migrants shall find their way into middle- and upper-class employment in the cities, with as few as possible left to become lifelong tenders of automatic machines. The school has a great responsibility to carry in this regard. Any indiscriminate forcing of the boy from the farms into vocational courses in agriculture would not be meeting this responsibility in a proper way. Those who are to attempt a success elsewhere than in farm life will stand a better chance of achieving it if they be given an early and hearty welcome to courses that are designed to prepare for life in general or possibly to vocational courses other than the agricultural, if such be available.

The fourth group, made up of those who wish to go to the city and wish to get some further education and training in preparation for taking better positions there than they would otherwise be able to secure, is in the poorest position of all as regards having their needs met in the home high school. They stand in as great need of industrial education as do the boys of the city who are going into industry. Lacking it, they will be at a great disadvantage as compared with the latter. It has been seriously asserted that the federal government would be justified in going to the expense necessary to provide industrial education for the sons of farmers.[1] There are, however, at least two good reasons why this will not be done in the visible future. In the first place, such a plan would be opposed by rural advocates of family-farm solidarity as being a most disruptive influence. In the second place, urban leaders in the federal government are not interested in decreasing the agricultural population to such an extent as might elevate the costs of foodstuffs. While many must continue to leave the agricultural districts for the cities, they must go for the most part very poorly prepared for urban employment.

Such of the fourth group as have favorable opportunities for remaining in the occupation of agriculture may well be advised by the school to consider very seriously the plan of preparing themselves in the school agriculture department and elsewhere to make a real career of farming. If they are the sort of boys who can profit by training and if the school is unable to afford them the industrial training which they desire, they may in many cases be developed for more successful lives as trained farmers than they could be able to experience as untrained factory hands. These students, however, should be told the absolute truth as fairly as the school can possibly present it in regard to the question of country *versus* city. They should not be given a distorted picture, as is so often

[1] MEAD, E. S., and BERNARD OSTRALENK, *Harvey Brown, a Study of the Agricultural Revolution*, H. Milford, Oxford University Press, London, 1928.

done. They should individually be aided to see, as accurately as some unbiased representative of the school is able to forecast it, just what their probable future as individuals would be in each of the two places. If the school is unable to present to its individual pupils such an unbiased forecast, as would in certain instances be the case, it is indeed unfortunate.

The fifth group, those who wish to leave the farm and do not see the advantage of high school education as a preparation for whatever occupational life they are going to lead, should be brought under school influence if possible. It is quite probable that, if the agriculture instructor is the only vocational teacher in the school, he would have more influence than anyone else on the boys of this group. It is desirable that these young men be awakened to the fact that time and effort spent in youth in preparation for adult life may be expected to lead to more satisfactory positions than could be obtained without such preparation. If they can be aroused to the importance of training, they will then be in the same situation as the members of the fourth group, just discussed. Many of them, but by no means all, have inferior capacity and are bound to hold the lowest-paying jobs in our industrial life. There are great numbers of young men of very good teachability on farms who do not care to become farmers, yet have no appreciation whatever of the desirability of education as a preparation for anything else. If the school influence, through such vocational training as it does offer, even if only in agriculture, can awaken in them an appreciation of the relation of training to future success, they may be led to secure what would mean most to them through correspondence schools, night schools in the city, or other agencies.

Farm girls stand in as great need of the proper sort of vocational training as do the boys. More of them than of the boys are leaving the farms for the city. Much that has been said about the boys will apply equally well to the girls. One important difference, however, between the boy and the girl on the farm consists in the fact that the former may decide while very young that he will become a farmer and he may remain unswervingly by that decision, preparing himself specifically for the occupation, while the latter may not. The girl cannot well become a farmer save through marriage. Even should she wish to live in the country and should she fancy the life of a farmer's wife and should she, with this end in view, specialize very successfully in household economics, supposing the department to be provided in her high school, she may be unable to carry out her plan and thus be forced to join the stream of migrants from farm to city.

Very seldom is it asked "How shall we keep the girl on the farm?" The girl as an individual is much less likely to be made the victim of a policy of vocational specialization in high school than is the boy. Caste pressure is not exerted on her to anything like the same extent that is

likely to be the case with her brother. She is in a negative sort of fashion more free than he. The rural school, however, does little as yet by way of vocational guidance and training which would contribute a positive sort of freedom to those girls who are not preparing for college. Thus many who by capacity are qualified for something better drift into the lowest-paid and most menial urban occupations.

CHAPTER XVI

ADULT EDUCATION

Education may be, and normally is, a long-continued process, beginning in earliest infancy and extending on through life as long as the individual retains any power of mental development. The few years that the young person spends as a student in school may or may not be for him his most important period of education. In any case, graduation or withdrawal from school in no true sense marks the conclusion of the learning process. Even in the case of the so-called "well-educated" person, there is a vast realm of knowledge which he has not mastered. To the extent that he is mentally alert and has access to the sources of new information, he may continue to expand his intellectual horizon. Ideally, increased knowledge means increased power to live. Those who know the most should be distinguished rather by their effectiveness in the art of living than by being mere depositories of information.

The adult farmer has educative needs not unlike those of other men. In the first place, for the sake of his occupational success he has the need of increased knowledge of the business of farming in all of its ramifications, as far as they may affect him. In the second place, as a member of society, he has other needs than the occupational which he cannot adequately satisfy without giving some time and attention to the matter of increasing his knowledge in various fields. It is the purpose of this chapter to consider certain educative agencies available to people on farms.

Agricultural Extension Work

In 1914, the Smith-Lever bill became a law by Congressional enactment. In accordance with its provisions a large amount of federal money is spent annually in cooperation with the state agricultural colleges to provide to farm people education in agriculture and home economics. In 1903, eleven years before this work was put upon a permanent basis through the passage of the Smith-Lever legislation, the U. S. Department of Agriculture began to demonstrate improved practices to farmers. The beginning was made in Texas under the supervision of Seaman A. Knapp. The increasing popularity and success among farmers of the method of vocational education through demonstration was largely influential in bringing about the establishment of the permanent organization for carrying on this activity. At the present time the project is one

of great magnitude. Dr. C. B. Smith, chief, Office of Cooperative Extension Work of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, writing in September, 1930, tells us that there were at that time more than 5,700 paid extension agents, including "a county agent staff of over 2,500, a home demonstration staff of over 1,300, and a specialist staff of over 1,100." In addition to the paid workers there were, according to Dr. Smith, over 240,000 local leaders and 1,500,000 demonstrators. This work has by no means reached the limit of its probable expansion. In the opinion of Dr. Smith, by 1940 the total paid staff will number more than 10,000 with 300,000 local leaders.[1]

The extension work in each state centers in its agricultural college. Its purpose is to carry to as many of the farmers and their wives in the state as possible what the college has to offer that may be of practical benefit. Its machinery consists of an extension department in the college with its staff of experts, along with other workers who are located in the several counties. These latter workers are known as "county agents" and "home demonstrators." The relationship of the county agent to the expert at the college is somewhat similar to that of the family doctor or general practitioner to the medical specialist. He is supposedly in close personal contact with the farmers in his county, giving them whatever vocational aid he is able to give. The expert subject-matter specialists at the college may be called in to assist in the handling of the more difficult situations, doing much of their work through the resident agents in the counties. The specialists, however, in addition to cooperating with the agents, make direct contacts as far as practicable with the farmers in their state. In one study covering a total of about 4,000 farms located in California, Colorado, Iowa, and New York, it was ascertained that the agricultural specialists had made direct contacts with nearly a third of the farmers.[2]

The County Agent.—While the subject-matter specialist is the most important element in the system from the standpoint of contact with the sources of information, the county agent is the most important from the standpoint of contact with the farming community.

The word "agent" was possibly an unfortunate choice. It does not at all accurately describe the nature of the services performed. The county agent is actually an agricultural college teacher who is none the less that merely because his classroom is out on the farms of his county instead of being on the campus.[3] He is a teacher whose hours of instruction while being indefinite are long. According to Dr. Smith, "his hours

[1] SMITH, C. B., "The Future of the Extension Worker," *Rural America*, September, 1930.

[2] HOFFER, CHARLES R., *Introduction to Rural Sociology*, Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York, 1930.

[3] SMITH, *op. cit.*

of teaching average twelve to fourteen hours each day, and he gives a part of his holidays and Sundays."

An agent in an Iowa county, writing for *Rural America*, describes in some detail the work of the county agent as he has experienced it.[1] Each year the farmers of his county are furnished some one definite program of instruction suited to the needs of as many farmers as possible, determined in large part by their expressed preferences. Some attention is given to the coordination of programs from year to year, an attempt being made to plan ahead for at least a five-year period. As concerns the somewhat formal programs, the first need is to decide upon their nature by consultation with as many interested farmers as possible. After the program has been adopted, the next need is a publicity campaign as widespread and vigorous as possible. Then, finally, there is the actual carrying out of the program by townships under local leadership, with the assistance of the agent. The selection of suitable leaders for each township group is one of the more important responsibilities of the agent.

Among the projects mentioned as suitable for annual programs of study for the farmers of this Iowa county are the following: drainage and erosion control, liming and legumes, fertilizers, hog vaccination, animal sanitation, and feeding methods. In addition to supervising the annual program in one such project, the agent furnishes individual advice and aid to those who are interested in securing up-to-date information upon matters not scheduled for special study during that year.

Professor Augustus W. Hayes quotes from the annual report of a county agent in Texas the following: "Spent 221 days in the field, 81 days in the office; made 349 farm visits and held 91 meetings. Traveled 6,627 miles; wrote 575 letters; had 1,049 office visits." This agent mentions among the definite things that he accomplished during the year the conducting of campaigns for control of cotton-leaf worm, the culling of flocks of poultry, the giving of assistance to farmers in securing two carloads of good dairy cows, the stopping of two outbreaks of cholera in hogs, the distribution of good seed, the conducting of a campaign against rabbits, rats, and ravens, and the contribution of more than a hundred news articles to various newspapers and magazines.[2]

In recent years county agents have more and more stressed group activities, whereas formerly they worked largely with individual farmers. Through the saving of time brought about by meeting his constituency in groups, the agent is able to make contacts with more farmers than would otherwise be possible. It has been demonstrated, as might be

[1] Maakestod, W. F., "Developing an Adult Education Program," *Rural America*, October, 1930.

[2] Hayes, Augustus W., *Rural Sociology*, p. 386, Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1929.

expected, that group members benefit more extensively than those who are not members of groups.[1] Obviously there is no way of determining to what extent the advantages derived by members *is due* to their membership in a group.

The County Home Demonstration Agent.—Formerly the work in home demonstration was a responsibility of the agricultural agent. Recently, home demonstration agents (women) have been added to the extension organization to give aid of the same general nature to farm women in the home that is being given to the men by the agricultural agents. Being a newer division of the work, home demonstration is not yet as far advanced in regard to numbers employed as is the case with the work carried on by the agricultural agents. It may be, in fact, that home demonstration will never be given the emphasis that is given to the part of the work concerned primarily with production. At present, there are about half as many home demonstrators as agricultural agents.

Work of the 4-H Club.—Strictly speaking, a discussion of boys' and girls' club work has no place in a chapter concerned with adult education. It may be, in fact, that the chapter is in general misnamed. The life of a farm family is so largely unspecialized that it is almost impossible to consider the interests of the parents separately from those of the children. The chapter is labeled "adult education" rather than "extracurricular education" for the purpose of throwing as much emphasis as possible upon the fact that farm adults have educational needs. The adult is the center of interest here to much the same extent as the child is the center of interest in the other chapters having to do with education. In the case of both child and adult there is on farms more of an entangling of interests than is general elsewhere.

Boys' and girls' club activities have become a very important part of agricultural extension work. Children enrolled in the high school department of vocational agriculture carry on projects under the direction of the Smith-Hughes agricultural teacher. Other children, including those who have not reached high school age and older children who are not pupils in Smith-Hughes schools are organized into groups to do work of a similar nature under the direction of the Smith-Lever agricultural agent.

The ideal back of 4-H Club work is complete development of the young person. Head, heart, health, and hands are represented by the "4-H" in the name. While benefits of various sorts may be achieved by the young club members, including training in leadership and teamwork, the chief emphasis is apparently placed upon the practical. Tangible results in the realm of vocational agriculture are stressed. Each child who becomes a member pledges himself to carry out some definite

[1] HOFFER, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

farm project, making use of the best methods as determined by agricultural experts.

In defense of the work of children's agricultural clubs, it may be pointed out that it accomplishes certain very desirable things. For one thing, the child may earn some money of his own if his project is successful. If he is allowed to keep the money he makes from his sale of the pigs he has raised or the corn he has grown, he may have spending money which might otherwise be lacking. Then, too, the work with the projects under expert guidance is training him to be a more successful farmer than he would probably become without such experience. It is also true that improved methods in agriculture, including those vocational activities which are carried on within doors such, for example, as the canning of fruits and vegetables, may be perhaps more easily disseminated in a community through the influence of children's clubs than in any other way.

While appreciating all of these desirable results and possibly others as well that may come from club work in vocational agriculture for children, one cannot conclude that this work merits unqualified approval. There is an ever-present danger in family-farm life that children may grow old too soon. Attitudes toward work and life appropriately held by the adult are not well suited to the child, in view of the special needs of his immature years. Social agencies of various kinds should be exercising their influence to guard childhood against the crowding in of adult attitudes. It is to be feared that the U. S. Department of Agriculture through its club work for children is to some extent responsible for hastening rather than retarding the aging process.

Club work for children in vocational agriculture obviously tends to commit the child to the occupation of agriculture. It not only does something—and possibly much—to transform boys and girls into little men and women, it adds its influence to that of the caste pressure naturally developing in the family-farm system to attach these immature young persons to the farming occupation. It is usual to speak of this as an *advantage* of club work. From the standpoint of the child's needs, however, as a person, early specialization and early commitment to any occupation are not to be desired. It seems to the author that the nature of both the Smith-Hughes and the Smith-Lever organizations are such as to make it easy for those who are in the service of either to give their primary attention to the occupation of agriculture rather than to the children who chance to be the sons and daughters of farmers.

Need for a Broadened Conception of Agricultural Extension Work

The attention of agricultural extension workers has been, and still is, concentrated very largely upon the detailed processes of agricultural

production and home economics. The farmer and his family have educational needs connected with their occupation, other than these, which should be met in some way. The machinery of agricultural extension work is without doubt capable of being adjusted to meet the larger needs when the latter become more generally understood. Nat T. Frame mentions and discusses what he considers to be some of the "larger objectives in extension work" in *Rural America.*[1] The subjects which he includes are the following:

The use of land and taxation:

a. Marginal lands not in agricultural production
b. Forest lands legally classified
c. Better county government
d. The tax burden

Rural-urban relations:

a. Plans of work based on trade areas
b. Industrial plants in rural communities
c. Social service for marginal families
d. Leisure time
e. Leadership for country boys and girls

Standards of living:

a. Principles of consumption
b. Minimum standards of rural living
c. Reducing costs of distribution

Rural adult education:

a. Continuing education
b. Scientific thinking
c. The artistic side
d. Cooperative philosophy in rural life

A program even as comprehensive as that indicated above, if presented by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, would be given an occupational bias. It would be a program for farmers and probable farmers, as such. Adjustment to farm life would be stressed, rather than adjustment to life in general. The function of departments of agriculture, both state and national, is necessarily somewhat narrowly circumscribed. They cannot be criticized for failing to meet all of the needs of the people whom they serve. There is no more logical reason for farmers and their families to look to the Department of Agriculture for complete satisfaction of their educational needs than for manufacturers and their families to expect as much of the Department of Commerce.

The traditional close relationship between the farmer's occupation and the rest of his life, along with the high degree of family solidarity

[1] FRAME, NAT T., "Larger Objectives of Extension Work," *Rural America*, April, 1930.

characteristic of farmers, has naturally impelled many in the occupation to turn to the governmental agencies, set up primarily to give them occupational aid, with the hope and expectation of receiving from these agencies the answers to every sort of question with which life confronts them. It is equally natural under the circumstances that these governmental agencies should have expended their activities in the attempt to meet the demands made upon them. For the sake, however, of the realization of the ideal of complete living for those who are on the farms, as much influence as possible should be brought to bear from some quarter to aid these rural people to understand that the farmer owes it to himself to be something more than a farmer and to demand to be served in large part by social agencies that are not primarily concerned with his occupational status.

Difficulties Faced by Agricultural Extension Workers.—The two most frequently mentioned difficulties faced by county agents and others in the carrying on of their work are the lack of properly trained leaders among the farming population and indifference upon the part of many farmers to the work which is being attempted.

If the work in agricultural extension is to proceed at all well in any locality, there must be available a considerable number of individuals who are qualified and willing to accept the responsibilities of group leadership. The county agent and other paid workers can accomplish relatively little if such leadership be lacking. For reasons that have been considered elsewhere in this volume, there is a dearth in farming communities of leaders. Agricultural extension is only one of many social activities that are prevented from the achievement of as high a quality of efficiency as is to be desired, largely because of the lack of good local leadership.

The indifference so frequently met with upon the part of individual farmers, and at times upon the part of whole communities, is the most serious obstacle to be encountered by those interested in advancing the activities of agricultural extension. Undoubtedly, interest is in part lacking because of the absence of good local leadership. Traditionally, however, farmers are so individualistic in attitude that they do not incline at all readily to accept such leadership when it is available. There is also a deep-rooted prejudice among farmers against scientific agriculture. It is quite the thing in many communities to scoff at "book farming." Occasionally the opinion, whether well founded or not, is developed that many county agents were themselves unsuccessful farmers. While it is of course true that unsuccessful farm experience would not necessarily incapacitate a man for aiding other farmers to improve upon their traditional methods, yet farmers are likely to reason otherwise, especially if at the outset they are victims of a prejudice against scientific agriculture. It is true, too, that many farmers are

constitutionally opposed to anything in the way of study. Many of these dropped out of school early and went into farming because they did not care to study. One of the chief attractions of the occupation to them was the fact that it was possible to make a living in it by following traditional methods, not involving the reading of books or the listening to lectures. If they had enjoyed studying while they were in school and had done well at their books, then they might have been in some other occupation, they feel, where book knowledge would be essential. As it is, they are farmers—with no intention of viewing their occupation as one calling for any serious mental application upon their part.

It is because of the farmer's distaste for theory and his lack of preparation for thinking in abstractions that much of the work in agricultural extension takes the demonstration form. If the farmer sees actual concrete results that are obviously superior to any that he has achieved, he may become curious as to the nature of the unfamiliar methods that are being used in the production of corn or potatoes or hogs and become willing to give the new methods a trial. Therefore, the extension worker who is to get favorable results must put his chief reliance upon demonstration rather than upon verbal exposition and exhortation.

The large amount of indifference among farmers as regards agricultural extension programs necessitates the putting on of drives of one sort or another by the workers who are responsible for the making of a favorable showing. Instead of the farmer going to the Department of Agriculture and asking aid in the solution of his problems, to a considerable extent the situation is reversed. Representatives of the department ambitious for getting results in the field of their endeavor go to the farmer and attempt through various means to awaken in him an interest in his own occupational betterment.

The farming class is in many respects, and for perfectly understandable reasons, a backward group. It is socially desirable that state and national influences should be vigorously exerted to improve rural conditions of life. It is, for example, unquestionably to the national advantage as well as to that of the farmer class that rural school systems should be improved and that the methods of rural health care should be modernized. The case is not quite the same, however, in the matter of agricultural production. The individual farmer has good reason to desire to increase the productivity of his farm. It is not, however, so clearly to the advantage of the farmer class as a whole or to that of the nation at large that agricultural production be increased. Thus to the extent that agricultural extension work is concerned with education in the direction of increased production, the desirability of nationally sponsored drives may be questioned. Systems have within themselves a powerful urge for perpetuation and expansion. Set up, in the first place, to serve human needs, they later tend to gather momentum and to

make use of men and women to foster institutional advancement. To what extent this may be the case with the work in agricultural extension, the present writer does not pretend to say. In any case, one cannot remind one's self too frequently that the only valid excuse for the existence of any institution is its contribution to human welfare. Institutional efficiency must be measured in terms of human life rather than in those merely of institutional advancement.

The Agricultural Journal

The agricultural journal is an educational agency of considerable importance among the farming people. The total circulation of the five hundred or more farm papers and magazines is about fifteen millions, three of the more widely circulated ones going into more than a million homes each.

Circulation figures tell almost nothing as to the actual influence of these journals in the homes to which they go. Just what proportion of subscribers actually read them cannot be told from any statistical studies yet made; and what proportion of readers go about their reading in such a way as to derive any systematically vital contact with the matters discussed in their pages can be only guessed. The subscription price is so low in most cases as not to act at all generally as an important deterrent to the farmer's subscribing when solicited. After the journal begins to come into the farm home, it is likely to keep coming for generations, not necessarily because of any definite benefit which the family feels that it is deriving from its coming but in many cases simply because its presence in the house, although unread, is felt to be essential to a sense of completeness. In much the same way that most Christian families would feel a bit ashamed not to have a Bible in the house, even though they may not look between its covers for years at a time, large numbers of farmers would feel a sense of incompleteness should the familiar farm paper or journal stop coming, entirely irrespective of how much definite use they pretend to make of it. The habit, in fact, may become so strong that farm people moving to the city continue their subscription to the farm paper. According to H. B. Hawthorne[1] not more than from one-half to three-quarters of the farm journals go into rural homes, with obviously a still smaller proportion going into the homes of farmers.

However, the farm journal is a potential influence of tremendous importance. Undoubtedly many more farmers have gained such information as they possess in the field of up-to-date technical knowledge from this source than from all other sources combined. Agricultural colleges, their experiment stations, and extension departments touch in a direct way but comparatively few. Many make careful, systematic, and

[1] Hawthorne, H. B., *The Sociology of Rural Life*, p. 376, Century Company, New York, 1926.

extremely beneficial use of the material presented by experts in the columns of the weekly or monthly farm periodical.

There are two opposing views as to the function of the agricultural journal. According to one of these views, without doubt the one most generally held, it should serve all of the interests of people who live on farms, distributing its space among the various interests in accordance with their relative importance. According to the other view, the farm periodical should be definitely a technical journal, devoting itself to the occupational aspects of the farmer's life, leaving his various other interests to be served by other agencies.

Generally, at the present time, the agricultural journals are following the first of these two plans, giving space to about every conceivable field of interest of farming people. The various periodicals distribute their space in varying proportions but for the most part stress matters concerned with technical production, touching very lightly the various cultural interests of life which most thoughtful people would rate very high in their scheme of complete living.

Professor Taylor reports a most interesting study[1] concerned with this matter. He submitted a questionnaire to "over one hundred students of rural life and agriculture, and teachers in the agricultural colleges of three institutions of higher learning representing three distinct sections of the nation," to ascertain their composite view regarding the relative importance of some thirteen interests of farming people. The result thus obtained is as follows:

1. Education and schools
2. Home and family
3. Technical production
4. Marketing
5. Cooperation, other than marketing
6. Health and sanitation
7. Church and religion
8. Transportation and communication
9. Recreation
10. Labor problems
11. Citizenship and politics
12. Agricultural engineering
13. Fiction and nature study

Professor Taylor gives an analysis of the distribution of space among the thirteen interests as made by twenty-eight of the more widely circulated journals. The composite result is as follows:

1. Technical production
2. Fiction and nature study
3. Marketing

[1] Taylor, Carl C., *Rural Sociology*, pp. 261–263, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1926.

4. Home and family
5. Cooperation, other than marketing
6. Citizenship and politics
7. Education and schools
8. Social news and social contacts
9. Agricultural engineering
10. Health and sanitation
11. Transportation and communication
12. Recreation
13. Labor

The implied conclusion is that the agricultural journal from the standpoint of its pretended service to the whole life of farming people is overstressing technical production, fiction and nature study, citizenship and politics, social news, and agricultural engineering at the expense of items concerning home and family, education and the schools, health and sanitation, transportation and communication, recreation, labor problems, and the church and religion.

Quantitative measurements are without doubt the only satisfactory statistical method of determining a paper's contribution under any given head. Conclusions drawn, however, on the basis of relative amounts of space in column inches devoted to various topics are not entirely convincing. A page each, for example, devoted to fiction and to health and sanitation would not necessarily mean equal contributions in those two fields. It would seem that the reader would be likely to get much less in the way of fiction values through the reading of a certain number of words than he might get in health values from reading an equal number of words, the two matters having been presented by writers of equal ability, each in his own field. It is without much doubt true, however, that in whatever way it may be determined, farm papers have given too little emphasis to certain phases of all-round living, provided it be assumed that the complete farm life should be the field of these papers.

According to the second view concerning the function of the agricultural journal, it should frankly become much more highly specialized than it is at present. The farmer has his own occupational problems, just as have the hardware merchant, the teacher, and the banker; and for the same reason he should be served occupationally by a technical journal. If the agricultural journal, however, attempts to cover the whole field of the farmer's human interests, as it so generally does at the present time, there is grave danger that it may convey a one-sided picture of life to those who take it seriously, overemphasizing such differences as may exist between farmers and others, thus erecting still higher such walls of isolation as already are in existence.

The family-farm system tends by its very nature to bring about a certain degree of isolation of those who live on farms from the general current of human life. The farmer and his family should be enabled

through the books and periodicals that they read to make some measure of escape from their occupational isolation. Everything possible should be done to encourage people on farms to read the very best that is being written for people anywhere to read, in all of the great fields of general human interest.

Periodicals of General Nature

For cultural advancement, as distinguished from occupational, members of every occupational group have increasing recourse to weekly and monthly periodicals. Even persons having libraries of considerable size and those who are regular borrowers of books from public libraries are likely to depend to a large extent upon the current magazines to aid them in keeping abreast of the world of thought. Those wishing to continue their general education on through adult years, or possibly to familiarize themselves with some special field of knowledge, are able to make from the list of magazines now available such a selection that they are able to go far toward accomplishing their purpose at relatively small expense.

Many farming people, in common with many people who live in the cities, are to such an extent lacking in educational preparation that they are unable to derive much value for themselves from any contact that they might make with the better magazines. Many others whose lives might be immeasurably enriched by such a contact are for one reason or another living without it, reading no more than the newspaper, the farm journal, and possibly a denominational religious periodical.

A study made in 1928 by Miss Grace Fernandes of periodical reading in farm homes located in five separate parts of Oklahoma is of interest.[1] Five hundred twenty-three homes were studied. Of this number, 312 or 59.7 per cent subscribed to no periodicals of general nature. The remaining 211 families read a total number of 365 magazines, or 1.74 to each family possessing reading material of this sort. Following is the list of 51 periodicals, each of which appeared in at least one of the 211 homes:

American
American Boy
American Needlewoman
American Woman
Better Homes and Gardens
Children's Magazine
Comfort
Collier's Weekly
Cosmopolitan
Delineator
Designer
The Gentlewoman
Good Housekeeping
Good Stories
Hearth and Home
Holland's
Home Friend
Home Life

[1] Fernandes, Grace, "A Critical Study of Periodical Reading in Farm Homes," *Bulletin* 176, Agricultural Experiment Station, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, May, 1928.

Household Guest
Home Magazine
House Beautiful
Household
Illustrated Companion
Journal of Home Economics
Ladies' Home Journal
Liberty
Literary Digest
Modern Priscilla
Mother's Home Life
McCalls
National Geographic
Needlecraft
Outdoor Recreation
Pathfinder
People's Magazine
People's Home Journal
People's Popular
Physical Culture
Pictorial Review
Popular Monthly
Popular Mechanics
Review of Reviews
Saturday Evening Post
True Story
True Confessions
Western Stories
Woman's Friend
Woman's Home Companion
Woman's World
Young People's Popular
Youth's Companion

While certain of the periodicals mentioned in the above list are worthy of places on the library tables of the best homes, the list is chiefly remarkable for the titles of fine magazines that are missing. As regards many of those listed, families whose general reading is limited to such are entitled to nothing more in the way of a cultural credit mark than are the 312 families who do no general periodical reading at all.

The low cost of several of the magazines in the list must be their chief recommendation to many who subscribe to them instead of to others of greater cultural value. Miss Fernandes ascertained the prices of 355 of the 365 magazines found in the homes covered by her study. She found that the proportion of those costing only twenty-five cents a year was larger than that whose cost was more than a dollar a year. The distribution of annual subscription rates was as follows:

Percentage	Price
24.2	Over $1.00
29	1.00
18.9	0.50
26.5	0.25
1.4	Scattering, but less than $1.00
100	

In many families, without doubt, there is a complete failure to appreciate the fact that some magazines have more to offer in the way of life values than have others, while in other families there is a recognized lack of ability to make good use of the better periodicals, even though it may be understood that the ones to which they subscribe are not of the best.

Improved rural schools along with the generally raised standard of living would seem to be essential prerequisites for any significant eleva-

tion of standards in the matter of the reading material of farm people. Reading and study clubs are often influential means for aiding those people who while prepared to make good use of valuable magazines have not previously formed good reading habits.

Of the periodicals appearing in the above list of 51, the following were found most frequently, the number of homes being indicated for each:

Household	74
Comfort	39
American	27
Ladies' Home Journal	25
McCalls	25
Holland's	24
Woman's Home Companion	20
Woman's World	17
Pictorial Review	12
People's Home Journal	9
Saturday Evening Post	7

Rural Public Library

Some farmers have good home libraries, made up of carefully selected volumes to which frequent additions are made. Most farmers, as is the case with most city people, do not have such libraries of their own. Many farm homes possess several books which for purposes of a questionnaire study may be called a library, but which from a functional point of view could never be classified as such. Books kept on the shelves for generations and seldom opened, and those purchased because of the salesmanship skill of some agent rather than because of any interest in the subject matter contained in them, are of little significance in any vital way. While the possession of the right sort of books is surely to be encouraged, there is a danger that the mere ownership of many volumes may give the owner a feeling of smug satisfaction which tends to prevent him from developing that intellectual unrest which might prepare him for making good use of new and worth-while books as they come along. The writer has in mind just now a farm woman more than eighty years of age who when asked what books she had been buying replied that she and her husband had never felt the need of buying any because they had inherited so many.

Two difficulties standing in the way of the building up and maintaining of a valuable home library sufficient to serve the developing needs of a family are to be found in the facts that books are expensive and that, even if one does not need to consider the matter of expense, so many good books are constantly being published that it is difficult to make a wise selection from among them. It is for these reasons that an increasing

number of well-read people possess relatively few of the books which they read, placing their chief dependence upon the public library. One of the chief cultural advantages of city life as contrasted with that of small towns and the open country consists in the superiority of library facilities which characterizes the former. Thus one of the important phases in the attempt to improve rural living conditions has to do with making libraries more readily accessible to country people.

The American Library Association has for some years been most vigorously working at the task of spreading library influence to people on farms. The goal towards which the Library Extension Board of the association is striving is stated in its fifth annual report (1931): "Adequate public library service within easy reach of everyone in the United States and Canada." The steps to be taken in the direction of this goal are described as follows:

1. A public opinion convinced of the value of public libraries and of high standards of library service;
2. Effective city libraries reaching their whole service areas;
3. The county or other large unit as the basis for adequate rural public-library service;
4. A strong state library extension agency in every state and province, to lead in library development, to give supplementary book service, and to give direct service until public-library service is developed.[1]

The Present Situation.—More than 40,000,000 rural people in the United States are at the present time without public library service. Of the 3,065 counties, 1,100 are entirely without public libraries, in addition to large sections in many of the other counties which are unsupplied with local library facilities.[2] In 1930, only 231 counties of the total of more than 3,000 were making an annual appropriation of $1,000 or more each for county-library service.[1]

The County Library.—The county has in general been considered the best-sized unit for providing country people with library facilities. State legislative enactment is necessary to make it possible for counties to tax themselves to maintain libraries. The only states (outside New England where the town is the library unit) in which at the present time (1931) permissive legislation has not been enacted are Florida, Georgia, Idaho, North Dakota, and Washington.[3]

A county library is one established by the vote of the people of the county or by that of their representatives and supported

[1] American Library Association, *Progress and Needs in Library Extension*, Chicago, 1931.

[2] American Library Association, *Library Extension News*, Chicago, May 1929.

[3] *Ibid.*

by taxation. In general, the headquarters library is maintained at the county seat and is open to those country people who care to patronize it directly. Most of the contacts with the library, however, are made through its branches which are maintained in convenient places throughout the county. Some of these branch libraries in villages are located in reading rooms. Others are merely deposits of books placed at strategic points such as schoolhouses, community houses, country stores, and filling stations. Books are constantly being moved about throughout the system in such a way that anyone in the county may have access to any book. In some counties, a book automobile makes house-to-house stops, furnishing the opportunity for direct personal contact between the librarian in charge of the circulating collection of books and the reader.

The annual appropriation required for maintaining an adequate county library may be stated to be from fifty cents to a dollar for each member of the population to be served. The amount must be large enough to pay the salary of a competent librarian, to provide transportation, and to make possible the owning of a good number of the right sort of books.[1]

State Aid for County Libraries.—Many counties are financially too poor to be expected to maintain from their own resources adequate library facilities. Because of this fact, agitation has been begun for state aid for county libraries. It may well be argued that it should be the concern of the whole state that no person within its borders shall lack ready access to library privileges. Thus far New Jersey is the only state to provide financial aid for county libraries. This state is second only to California in the matter of county-library development.[2]

County-library Demonstration.—As an aid to the development of local opinion to the point where it will support a county library, demonstration projects under state or other auspices have been shown to be effective. In the matter of libraries, as in that of various other desirable additions to a community, farming people because of their conservatism often need actually to be shown in concrete form the advantages to be derived before they will become vitally interested. In certain cases state library extension boards have been instrumental in carrying on county demonstrations, a part or all of the necessary funds being supplied by legislative appropriation. In other cases, private agencies have contributed in a large way to the carrying out of such projects. The Julius Rosenwald Fund is at the present time (1931) appropriating more than

[1] Merrill, Julia W., "The County Library Gains Recognition," *Rural America*, March, 1929.

[2] American Library Association, *Progress and Needs in Library Extension*, Chicago, 1931.

half a million dollars to be expended over a five-year period for eleven county demonstration libraries in the South. The eleven are distributed as follows: one each in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas; two each in North Carolina and South Carolina; three in Tennessee. The Carnegie Corporation is also aiding in this work.[1]

Library Units Larger Than the County.—In certain sections of the country in which for any reason the county appears to be too small a unit to make intensive library service practicable, it may be possible to develop units larger than the county for the carrying on of this work. In the northern part of Vermont, for example, experimentation with district units, the districts to be made up of parts of two or more counties, is about to be undertaken. While the county has been thought of as being in general the most suitable unit for library administration, opportunities should be provided through state legislation for the organization of units of larger size.

The Librarian.—Whatever may be the systems of library administration found to be most suitable in various regions for making a good supply of well-chosen books easily accessible to farming people, the librarian is a most important part of every such system. The significant contribution of a rural library to the process of adult education is dependent upon the efficient service of the person or persons in charge of the library. A sufficient number of good books is a basis essential to a library's success. It alone, however, is not enough.

In the past, librarians have felt that their first interest should be in the books under their care, their first and main duty to prevent these books from being lost or stolen. More and more, the librarians of the present are finding their main interest in the people whom they serve, and this service is increasingly being understood to mean not merely an attempt to meet reading tastes already existing but to aid in developing new and improved literary tastes.

Especially in the case of farming people, it is desirable as far as practicable to take the books to them rather than to wait for them to come even to a near-by branch library. Many farmers have been accustomed to think of the reading of books as exclusively an urban pursuit. This is an attitude not easy to combat. If the librarian with her "bookmobile" comes out from the city and drives right through the village and up to the very door of his house in the country and discusses with him there the merits of the various books in her collection, there is a better likelihood of the farmer developing the book-reading habit than if the librarian waits for the farmer to come halfway. If the librarian is thoroughly capable and if she is adequately provided with books and equipment, in many communities she will be the most wholesomely important influence in rural adult education.

[1] *Ibid.*

Other Educative Agencies

Certain potentially important agencies of adult education are considered in the chapter on communication. The press, including the city daily and the country weekly, the radio, and the motion picture—all of these have significant possibilities in the field of education. The decision to discuss them under the communication heading rather than under that of adult education was very largely an arbitrary one, and by no means should be thought to imply that they need be unimportant from the educational point of view.

The Chautauqua lecture program has been for many rural people an important educational influence. With the rapid development of the radio and the talking motion pictures during recent years, the Chautauqua has lost much of its popularity, at least in certain sections of the country. Information secured by Prof. C. C. Taylor some time ago from certain of the more important companies in the United States indicated that they considered that their institution was more popular in small towns, with audiences made up largely of farmers, than elsewhere. It was indicated, also, that farmers wished rather to be entertained than instructed by the programs. In spite of the fact that farmers placed main emphasis upon the entertainment features of the programs, it was the opinion of Professor Taylor (in 1926) that farmers were receiving their most "cosmopolitan education" from the Chautauqua platform.[1]

[1] Taylor, Carl C., *Rural Sociology*, p. 282, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1926.

CHAPTER XVII

RELIGION AND THE CHURCH

All men are either actually or potentially religious. Most of those who consider themselves irreligious are not so in fact, and even those who may properly be thought of as such have it in them to develop for themselves creeds, or statements of belief regarding the great and mysterious forces of life, emotional attitudes related to their beliefs, and types of conduct influenced by their religious thought and feeling. Just as long as men find something in life which they cannot explain or control but which they must acknowledge to have power over them, they may be said to have a religious need. Some men are ever conscious of the powerful mysteries of life or God. Others, less imaginative, are awakened from their preoccupation with the tangible things of existence only in time of impending calamity or crisis.

In general, it may be said that modern men are actually less religious than their primitive forebears. Mystery does not obtrude itself into the affairs of everyday life to the extent that it did in prescientific days. Science has so enlarged the development of the known, that it is now possible for the person with a matter-of-fact mind to live largely conscious only of material surroundings, satisfied with what he may see and handle and understand. Those, however, who through some combination of instinct and training are impelled to think and feel and act religiously must be considered to be experiencing a richer life than would otherwise be theirs.

The individual is a social being. Everything distinctively human in his nature has a social origin. Whatever so-called "individual religion" a man may develop for himself has a social history. Even though he may react against all of the institutionalized trappings of religion of which he has knowledge, he cannot be unaffected by them. Just as truly as man may have no human existence apart from the group, he can have no religion to which the group has not in some fashion made its contribution.

The church may be said to bear much the same relation to religion that the school bears to education. It is the religious institution. Some men who have had very little contact with the schools must be considered well educated. It is just as true that some who have had little to do with the church are deeply religious. Each of the two institutions, however, has a long history of development in its special field, having

been made what it is through the strivings of countless generations of devoted individuals who have given their best to make their institution more efficient in its own special field in the service of humanity. In general, the individual who wishes an education is wise to attend school, and the one who wishes satisfaction of a religious need, to ally himself with the church.

Religion and the church, however, cannot be thought of as synonymous. Many religious individuals are outside of the church. Many church people are thoroughly irreligious, observing the forms, which should be but a means to an end, and missing entirely the substance of a religious life. Many achieve a religious attitude toward life apparently in spite of the church to which they give formal allegiance. Many find in their church just what they need in the way of inspiration and of guidance to make of their everyday life a truly religious experience.

Statements to the effect that farming people are either more or less religious than others are not very convincing. The farming population is far from homogeneous, while the urbanites are extremely heterogeneous, in the field of religious experience as well as elsewhere. Generalizations may not be safely made. Family-farm life, in that it is relatively primitive, would be expected to be favorable to the perpetuation of conservative religious attitudes. The religion of a prescientific age would be expected to characterize the population of family farms more than that of the business and professional groups of the cities. Upon the one hand, having to deal day by day with the forces of nature over which they have relatively little control and, upon the other hand, being forced to depend largely upon family tradition as a source of attitudes towards the unseen mysteries of their existence, naturally many farmers live largely in a realm of magic and primitive religion, planting their crops "in the moon" and praying for rain or sunshine.

Religion, to be vital, must relate itself to the facts of experience. If one's occupational experience be limited largely to dealing with natural phenomena of which he has no scientific knowledge and his social experience be limited nearly as completely to life in the family or immediate neighborhood, the aid of religion is naturally sought to bring bountiful crops, here and now, and to guarantee a pleasant immortality for one's individual soul and for those of his relatives and friends. A broadly social religion is possible only for those whose experiences are broadly social. The new instrumentalities of modern communication are making it more readily possible to develop modern religious attitudes in the open-country districts.

Religious Attitudes of Farming People

Conservatism in religion is bound to accompany conservatism in other fields of thought. Farming people, owing, more than anything else it

would seem to the solidarity of their family life, are mentally conservative. The old is constantly brought to their attention, the new is likely not to come into their field of vision at all, on account of their social isolation, or at least to receive no fair chance of acceptance. In religion, of all the fields of the farmers' thought, modernism is most likely to meet with stern opposition. The superiority of modern agricultural methods over the ancient is subject to proof and demonstration. Modern agricultural equipment can be shown to make possible increased production at lowered costs. The farmer is more ready to accept new ideas in this field than elsewhere because the advantages of the new may be readily demonstrated to him. The superiority of modern religious beliefs over the old is not so readily subject to demonstration. Religious beliefs and attitudes to be at all vital must be in harmony with the rest of the individual's life. Therefore a conservative religion is the only sort available for those whose general attitude toward life is one of conservatism. Modernization all along the line in his daily life must take place before modernism in religious thought can seem to the typical farmer to be truly religious. Cooley remarks, "We need to believe, and we shall believe what we can."[1] Obviously, one cannot believe something which the totality of his life's contacts and experiences has prepared him to reject.

Rural religious experience as contrasted with that of the cities is more emotional in character. There are at least two good reasons why this is the case. In the first place, the more simple social life of the farmer does not make the constant demand upon his emotional nature that is experienced by those who live more nearly at the center of the social stream. The typical urbanite has a fairly steady outlet for his expression of feeling. There is never with him an accumulation of emotional energy pushing for expression by means of religious frenzy or otherwise. The farmer, through relative lack of daily demands upon his emotion, finds in his religious service an accepted opportunity for emotional relief. Real religion is always at least in part an affair of the emotions. It is to be expected that, especially in the more completely isolated rural communities, extreme manifestations of emotional outpouring should characterize religious services. The "Holy Roller" and similar sects thrive almost entirely in rural regions. The rural churches of the Baptist, Methodist, and other great denominations are more largely characterized by unrestrained emotional expression among their membership while at worship than is the case with the churches of the same denominations located in the cities.

The second reason for the greater emotional character of rural religious expression as contrasted with that of the cities is to be attributed

[1] Cooley, C. H., *Social Organization*, p. 375, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1909.

to the family solidarity of the farming people. Frontier religious characteristics are perpetuated long after the frontier has passed, owing to the dominating influence of the old over the young. Generation after generation, parents pass on to their children customs in regard to religious attitudes as well as those having to do with other phases of life. The determination of religious parents to train their children well in the field of religion is very real. The very salvation of their children's souls seem to them to be at stake. Therefore, not alone beliefs but emotional attitudes and types of expression are jealously fostered in those they love.

As contrasted with the religions of the cities, that of the farm stresses Old Testament austerity rather than New Testament love. Farm life characterized by much that is hard naturally leads those who constantly experience it to think religiously in terms of denial and discipline rather than in those of self-expression and freedom. The keeping of commandments of the "thou-shalt-not" type is the very heart of the conduct side of the typical farmer's religion. In addition to the Ten Commandments of the old Jewish law, he observes certain others such as "Thou shall not play cards, nor dance, nor attend the theater." The constructive moral admonitions of Christ, such as "Love thy neighbor as thyself," have a difficult time in gaining a foothold in the religious programs of farmer Christians. A man's real religion must harmonize with the rest of his life. It cannot come to him merely as the result of teaching in a special field even though the teacher be the acknowledged founder of the religion which he accepts. Actual experience in living must lead the way, and isolation, to whatever due, furnishes no proper basis for a world-wide brotherly love.

Characteristics of the Rural Church

In the case of the church, there is something more tangible to be considered than religion. However completely or incompletely the religious institution may represent the religious life of the community, at any rate the church is a social institution of great importance worthy of careful consideration on its own merits.

The church of the American farming population is very largely of the Christian religion and Protestant. Most of the colonial settlers in America were Protestants. The farmers and other rural inhabitants of the present day are very largely descendants of those early Protestant settlers—therefore the present strength of Protestantism in rural communities. The city population, made up largely of later immigrants, is to a much smaller extent Protestant or even Christian. Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Jews abound in urban communities, and various other religious faiths, such as Confucianism and Buddhism, are far from unrepresented there.

The present Protestantism of the agricultural population is due in the main to historical causes. The farmers of the present day have naturally continued to subscribe to the creeds of their pioneer forefathers. Those forefathers of colonial and later days were, in the main, from the Protestant countries of Northern Europe. It is easy to associate in one's thinking Protestantism and pioneering. It has been argued by some writers that country life is a more natural life for the protesting sort of personality. The present-day Protestants of the farms, however, are about as completely dominated by the authoritarian spirit as are the Roman Catholics of the city. Family-farm life of the present day is congenial to a religion of relatively static nature. There seems to be no good reason to suppose that Catholicism would not thrive at least as well on the farms as it does in the cities, provided only that the farmers of the present day could have inherited that form of Christianity from their parents. Pioneer farmers are necessarily characterized by independence and self-reliance. The grandchildren of the pioneers yet on farms, and those of still later generations, are very largely of a different sort. Their thought and conduct, religious as well as otherwise, are molded according to an inherited family pattern.

Rural Church Membership

It is indicated by the census statistics that there is a deficiency in church membership in the smaller cities and open country, taken together, as compared with the larger cities of the nation. According to the Bureau of Census report, while 32.7 per cent of the total population lived in cities of 25,000 and over, 36.5 per cent of the total church membership of the nation were living in these larger cities.[1] Conversely, 67.3 per cent of the total population living outside of these cities furnished only 63.5 per cent of the total church membership. Sorokin and Zimmerman,[2] however, call attention to the important fact that the method of enrollment in the predominantly urban Roman Catholic and Eastern churches is very different from that of the predominantly rural Protestant churches. The former include in their lists of membership infants and young children, while many of the larger Protestant denominations do not admit to membership those who have not yet reached the age of intelligent choice. When one remembers, in connection with this, that the open-country population includes an excess number of children too young for church membership according to the methods of enrollment prevalent in the rural districts, it seems highly probable that the churches outside

[1] U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies*, Vol. 1, p. 119, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1916.

[2] Sorokin, Pitrim, and C. C. Zimmerman, *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, Henry Holt & Company, New York, 1929.

the larger cities had, at least in 1916, their full share of members. Still one cannot determine this matter with any degree of certainty. There is a possibility that the membership rolls of rural churches are less accurately kept than those of the cities. Dr. C. O. Gill and other writers have found many cases in their studies of the rural church in which returns for the religious census were padded—though one may doubt that this was often done with intent to deceive. Names are carried on the lists of many who have long since moved out of the community, of others who while still living in the community have been for many years inactive; and in some cases even the names of persons who have died are still to be found on the lists.

In any case, there is considerable evidence to the effect that rural church membership is declining and that the church does not in general hold so important a place in rural life as was formerly the case. Even if one had no statistical knowledge of the existing situation regarding the country church, he would be able to infer with a high degree of assurance that it had been suffering a decline. Some of the factors that would readily occur to one are the following:

1. In recent years there has been a marked loss of farming population. Abandoned farms, unoccupied farmhouses, and fewer children in the houses that are occupied would be expected to make for decreased membership in the churches of the community.

2. One would guess that the migration to the cities has been somewhat predominantly of the church people. Those who take advantage of the cultural opportunities at hand are the ones most likely to become interested in securing for themselves opportunities which the local community fails to afford. In general, country churches, in spite of denominational and other forms of narrowness, have been centers of community culture, attracting to themselves a good proportion of the ambitious, idealistic people of the community. The forces of family tradition have kept the children and grandchildren of pioneering, church-building ancestors in allegiance to the churches which their forebears established. These children and later descendants of the pioneers form a large part of the present land-owning portion of the community's population. They are among the community's "best people." Membership in the church and leadership in its activities are largely taken for granted by them. This is the class which more than any other, without doubt, has been depleted by the processes of urban selection. The going of these people has taken from the church not only members but, to a large extent, leading members.

3. A corollary to this last point is the fact of the increasing number of renters among the farming population. Renters are less likely to be interested in the church and other organizations of the community than are owners. Thus, this is one cause of church decline.

4. Another important fact is the centralizing influence of modern communication. Improved roads and the automobile have made for the abandonment of many open-country gathering places. Country stores, post offices, and schools, as well as churches, have closed their doors. The village and small town have become community centers for a larger area than was formerly the case. Certain families who formerly walked or drove with horse and carriage to a near-by country church now go by automobile to the village church possibly several miles away from their homes. Certain other farm families who never were, and never would be, attracted to the church in the open country have allied themselves to the church in town with its better service. Many others, however, who did attend and aid in the support of the little church in their local neighborhood have failed to transfer their allegiance to the church in town. In general, the religious organizations of the town do not work their outlying territory with anything like the same zeal that is displayed by the town merchants. Saturday night the village streets are likely to be thronged with farmers who have gathered there for business and recreational reasons. They take advantage of advertised bargains in the stores, listen to the band concert, and attend the picture show. Sunday morning they do not come in for church. Denominational jealousies are in part responsible for the failure of village churches to display the same energy in attempting to interest farming people as that displayed by the business interests of the town.

Another factor tending to prevent the attendance and membership of farming people in the town church is the "social nature" of the church. However the farmer may be dressed and whatever in general may be his degree of "culture," he has every reason to feel that he is welcome in the stores and offices and banks of the village. He is not so sure of a real welcome in the churches and other social organizations of the town. He might have felt perfectly at home in the little neighborhood church where everyone was well acquainted with everyone else, thus where dress and speech and other externalities were taken little account of. The little neighborhood church, however, has closed its doors, and certain external requirements are either needed or felt to be needed for admission to places of religious worship in the village. A real or imagined lack in these regards serves to keep thousands of farm people outside the church, thus aiding to reduce rural membership.

5. Formerly, possibly the chief motive for church membership and attendance was to assure oneself of safe entry to a heaven after death. This motive has greatly weakened during recent years, even among conservative farming people. Much less thought is given to Heaven and Hell; much more, to the possibility of an improvement of this present life. This has made for a great loss of the old religion and of the old reasons for church affiliation. New motives are slow to make their

appeal to a naturally conservative people. It is much easier to lose the old than to gain the new. Thousands of farming people, as well as others, who would not admit that they have lost their religion have come to feel that nothing of importance in a religious way is to be gained by church membership and thus have allowed their membership to lapse.

6. At one time, the church was the chief and almost the only reputable social club of the rural community. The church building served as the main gathering place for neighbors and friends. The socially inclined found in this fact a compelling motive for their association with the institution. Today, there is an increasing number of competitors. Consolidated schools and community houses and commercial places of amusement are more and more meeting the social needs that were formerly met almost exclusively by the church. The new means of communication and transportation are affording the farmer a much greater opportunity for choice in this regard than he formerly had. Therefore it is to be expected that great and increasing numbers of farmers will choose to satisfy their social needs elsewhere than in the church.

7. Closely allied to the above is the fact that the country minister has declined at least in relative significance in the last few decades. It may be, as is thought by some writers, that ministers, at least of country churches, are absolutely inferior in capacity and training to those of 50 or more years ago. Theoretically, this would be expected. With the decline in social importance and esteem of the rural church would seem to go a lessening in attractiveness of the ministry as a profession in the eyes of the more capable and ambitious young men. At any rate, however competent the rural minister may be at the present time, his relative position is far lower than was the case a generation and more ago. At one time, he was generally the only person in the community who had experienced anything of higher education. He was in a class by himself from the standpoint of "book knowledge." This gave him and the institution he served a certain prestige which would be bound to attract and hold a following.

Today, there are likely to be several college-trained people in the community. Children home from college and university, even if only for a vacation, are apt to assume a patronizing or critical attitude toward the minister. Other institutions in the community are under the direction of men and women who give the impression of being at least as well educated as the minister. The decline in ministerial prestige which results is bound to be reflected in decreasing membership of the church.

8. The radio is at least potentially a great boon to the relatively isolated farm family. Just what influence it may be having upon church membership and attendance it may be difficult to determine. The possibility of hearing the best of pulpit orators and the finest of

religious music without ever leaving one's home tends to decrease interest in the small village and open-country church, especially where social needs can be satisfied elsewhere.

9. Family discipline and solidarity, even in the case of the relatively close-knit family life on the farms, have been decreasing in recent years. Young people are not so likely as was formerly the case to become church members and attendants through the force of family custom and tradition. This has become one of the more important factors making for rural-church decline.

H. N. Morse and E. S. des Brunner have given us in their volume *The Town and Country Church in the United States* (1923) one of the most complete studies yet presented of the rural-church situation. One hundred seventy-nine representative counties were made the subject of a careful survey. The findings may be assumed to be reasonably valid as applying to rural America as a whole.[1]

According to this study somewhat more than two-fifths of all rural churches are failing to grow. Only about a half of them are growing at an annual rate of 10 per cent or more. Most of the rural churches showing an annual increase in membership are located in small towns and villages. Only 47 per cent of hamlet churches are showing any growth.

Another bit of evidence pointing to rural church decline is furnished by the Census of Religious Bodies for 1926.[2] During the 10-year period immediately preceding 1926, nineteen states, all of them largely rural, experienced a net decline in number of churches. The states were Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Maryland, Kentucky, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon.

A Reasonable Goal for the Rural Church

So far in this discussion of the church, some of the factors have been considered that might be expected to make for a decline in membership and interest in the institution as it exists in the country. Certain items of statistical evidence have been presented which substantiate the theory presented. Rural church decline is a fact.

If it be desirable that the church in the country should be revitalized and placed back in its former position of prestige, or given even greater real significance than it has heretofore possessed, the next logical step in the discussion is to picture a reasonable sort of goal as regards organized religion in rural communities.

[1] Morse, H. N., and E. des Brunner, *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, Chap. V, Doubleday Doran & Company, Garden City, N. Y., 1923.

[2] U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies*, Vol. 1, p. 56, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1926.

1. Unity of organization is one of the more important elements of the ideal goal. The church should be the community functioning in the field of religion. The community should not be divided into sectarian groups in competition with one another. Much energy at the present time is being worse than wasted in countless numbers of village and open-country areas by denominational conflict. The driving force back of these conflicts is generally not the fact of creedal differences. It is, in at least a great proportion of cases, a merely traditional quarrel between different church groups, the basis of which no one very clearly understands. For example, each little group of Baptists and Methodists and Congregationalists, being in the main the children of Baptists and Methodists and Congregationalists, are brought up to feel that those bearing other denominational labels are not so worthy in some way as themselves. Denominational bickering obviously greatly weakens a community religiously. It is likely also to be carried into various other phases of the community life. The educational, industrial, and political processes are all of them apt to be adversely affected by church antagonisms. A community might be better off with no churches at all than in a situation where three or four or more of them were forever at war with one another, discrediting the religion of Christ in the eyes of curious outsiders and weakening the effectiveness of every worthy activity in the community because of their bickering.

One church, it would seem, should be sufficient for the population of a township, unless the numbers were unusually large. Were there a single church in the community, the cause of religion might thereby be greatly strengthened. Children growing up would see not various weak and struggling churches but "The Church," a strong and dignified representation of religion in that locality. It would lend increased attractiveness to the idea of religion just as does the consolidated school to the idea of education.

Uniformity of religious outlook should not be expected or desired in the individual members of a given church. Each may have his own private creed, his own religious individuality, just as students in a good school have their special interests and are not molded according to a single pattern. It is unfortunate, however, if the residents of a single community who call themselves Christians have not enough in common to enable them to work shoulder to shoulder in a single organization. This unified organization may call itself by some one denominational name and be affiliated with the state and national organizations of that denomination. It may be a federated church, containing members of various denominations, each member maintaining his allegiance to the denomination of his choice or his inheritance while at the same time working harmoniously side by side with those of other denominations. It may be known simply as a community church. Each method has its advantages

as well as its disadvantages. Once people succeed in worshipping and working together, denominational lines separating them will tend to fade away.

2. This unified church organization of the community should be housed in a thoroughly modern, sufficiently large, and conveniently located building. The physical equipment should be as adequate for its purposes as are the best residences of the community for theirs. The purpose of the building should include more than the mere provision of a place in which people may sit and listen to a sermon. Social and recreational activities should be adequately provided for. Various small rooms should be provided to meet the various needs that arise in connection with the carrying out of a comprehensive program of religious instruction and service.

3. The pastor should, of course, be a full-time resident. His salary should be as high as that of any other public servant of the community. If the school superintendent is better paid than the minister, the chances are that he will be a more capable, better-trained man than the latter. If the religious interests are as important as the educational, they should be served by as competent leaders. In a large parish, the pastor should be provided with trained and salaried assistants.

4. The church should be so organized as to make full use of every bit of leadership ability that may be discovered in its membership. Various small groups should have their own special organized activities under their own leaders. Responsibility should be distributed among as many individuals as are capable and willing to carry it.

5. It should work its whole area as vigorously and as intelligently as does any organization in the community. Every person in the community should be reached by its direct influence. In the ideal community every adult resident would be a member of the church, and every child would bear a definite relationship to it.

6. Every individual member and communicant should be enabled to feel that through the church certain of his vital needs are being met. The religious need is the need to feel a sustaining force holding one steady in the midst of the perplexing vicissitudes of life. Each individual has his private problems and discouragements. The program of the church should be so completely individualized that it may give each person the specific sort of assistance that he needs in the way both of the development of ideals of right living and of assuring force to aid him in maintaining his ideals in time of difficulty. The pastor and his helpers should be the sort of people to command the respect of the individuals concerned, else nothing significant may be accomplished. Provision should be made for sufficient time for individual conferences which may possibly be made of more importance in the work of the church than any other of its activities.

7. The minister, both in his sermons and in all of the other contacts with his people, should strike the happy medium between "talking over their heads" and talking in terms of the too familiar. Rural sociologists are likely to say that the rural minister should be "country minded." If this term means what it seems to mean and what it actually does mean to many people who use it, it stands for something to be guarded against in those who should be expected to speak for life in its larger phases. Ministers, both rural and urban, should be the sort of men who enjoy country life. They should also be broadly enough educated to have an intelligent appreciation of the present-day problems of the industry of agriculture. Whether rural or urban, they should not be the sort to increase antagonism between farmers and others. While farmers should be enabled to listen to sermons given by men who understand them, they should not expect their minister to be an agricultural expert. They should not expect him to do the work of a county agricultural agent or of the agricultural instructor in the school. One function of the religious services, including the sermon, should be to enable farmers and those of every other occupation to forget for the time being their occupational interests and problems. Men and women should have some opportunity during the week to live temporarily in a world finer, broader, and more human than that of any occupation. The religious service should furnish them with one such opportunity. If the minister be unable to perform this function for his parishioners, he must be rated unequal to the great task of the ministry. It is primarily men and women rather than farmers that the rural minister should feel himself called to serve. The church should stand as a constant reminder to its people that they are citizens of a larger world than that of their local community and that they have responsibilities both to themselves and to the larger society that cannot be completely described in occupational terms.

Much is being said of the desirability of developing a specialized rural clergy. There are, in the opinion of the writer, very real objections to such a plan. The minister of a rural church, whether temporary or permanent, should be the sort of man who can feel at home in a rural parish. His attitude toward the country and its people should not be one of condescension. He should use every available means to understand the rural community individually and collectively. Salaries in the country should be high enough so that ministers living there would not be as a matter of course fixing their attention on the city and thinking of an opportunity to go there as a promotion. The fixing of a rural or an urban label, however, upon the minister or the man of any other profession implies a more or less permanent line of separation between the natures of country and city people which ought not to be aided to exist. The more successful men of every profession are adaptable men. Ministers who might be considered by their nature and their training to be qualified for

service only in the country or only in the city are, in the opinion of the writer, not well qualified for service in the ministry anywhere. Preferably, the pastor of the ideal country church of this discussion shall have had successful urban experience.

8. While the supreme business of the church is spiritual, having to do with ideals and aspirations in their more generalized and universal aspects, its work need not be limited to these matters. It is the one institution of the community which more than any other should be ready to take over worthy tasks which no other agency is performing. If other agencies are effectively looking after such matters as health, recreation, education, social improvement, well and good. The church can in such a case limit its work to the preparation of its people to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by such agencies and to fill them with enthusiastic zeal for service in various capacities in the organizations involved. If, however, certain of such agencies are lacking, the church is fully justified in stepping into the gap and filling the need through its own organization. All of the time, the church should realize, and give evidence of the realization, that it does not exist for itself alone. It is only one cooperative agency in the complex scheme of modern living, and it should be the most perfect exponent in its community of the cooperative spirit.

Difficulties to Be Overcome in the Achievement of a Worthy Goal

It is next in order to consider some of the difficulties in the way of the achievement of the desired goal which has just been described and some of the means which may be found successful in meeting these difficulties.

1. The typical rural community is characterized by a great lack of religious unity. For many country people, Christianity means denominationalism. The greater the solidarity of family life, the more completely, other things being equal, will denominationalism rule. The children of Methodists will think of Methodism, and of Congregationalists of Congregationalism, in a society in which family traditions are as firmly entrenched as they are likely to be in a community of family farms. National denominational leaders have been influential in the process of keeping the fires of denominationalism burning.

The way to anything like a unified church organization in the local community is likely to involve a slow and painful process of transformation. Narrowness in the field of religion is intimately associated with other sorts of narrowness. There is needed to be brought to bear on such a community broadening influences from various sources. High denominational officials should realize that, whatever the situation may be in the cities, rural communities simply cannot afford denominational rivalries. If such leaders should together fix their attention simul-

taneously on any given country or village community and work and talk in terms of the desirability of unified organization for that community, they would be quite likely to secure results. Professor Walter Burr in discussing the matter of rural church division remarks, "The remedy? It lies with officialdom. I maintain that the leaders of five of the large denominations could start a movement, if they wished to, at once, to make the rural church a success."[1]

Canada has apparently gone much further with the solution of the rural church problem than has the United States. Dr. H. S. Lovering, reading a paper on "The United Church of Canada" before the meeting of the Second International Country Life Commission, in August, 1927,[2] mentioned the fact that two million of Canada's population of nine million were of the United Church, seven hundred thousand of them being members. The separate denominations in Canada giving up their individual existence that the United Church might come into being were the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Congregationalists. According to Dr. Lovering, "It was the rural problem that created the United Church in Canada," and he remarks that the union has brought about "the rebirth of a religious consciousness."

The "larger parish" movement is one of the more hopeful developments towards church unity in the United States. The first interdenominational "larger parish" to be organized is described by Mr. James Myers.[3] This organization which is located in Maine is known as the Oxford County United Parish. It covers an area "twenty miles long and five or ten miles wide" equivalent possibly to that of four or five townships. This parish is served by three full-time and well-paid men who are designated respectively as follows: "minister of worship," "minister of education," "minister of parish activities." There are seven preaching points in the parish and all three of the men preach every Sunday. Every family in the parish is reached through pastoral calls of the parish ministers. "Effective community service" is made possible by the unified church organization that has been developed. A part of the financial support is provided through the state missionary boards of "three cooperating denominations, the Congregationalists the Universalists, and the Methodists."

It may seem that the church should be leading the way to unification of spirit and effort instead of being tardily drawn into line behind the consolidation of schools and the development of agricultural cooperative societies. As a matter of fact, however, the church has seldom led the way at any time or place. It is rather a conserver of values than a

[1] Burr, Walter, in *The Country Life Bulletin*, November, 1924.

[2] Lovering, H. S., "The United Church of Canada," *Proceedings of the Second International Country Life Commission*, Michigan State College, East Lansing, 1927.

[3] Myers, James, "The Larger Parish," *Rural America*, December, 1929.

pioneering discoverer of them. Men will in general prefer to experiment with anything else rather than with their institutions of religion.

The movement towards cooperation of the church with other community agencies is retarded greatly by isolationist attitudes on the part, especially, of many older people. It is not simply a matter of inertia with them. They think of the church as a thing apart from what they call the "world." It is to them a holy institution to be guarded against influences from without. In this light, the fact that cooperation is the order of the day in the industrial, educational, and recreational activities of the community would mean that it, being a device of this world, should not be made use of in the affairs of religion.

This attitude is bound to decrease with the passing of the older members of the community. Young people who have experienced cooperation in various activities of life cannot put the church in a separate compartment of their thinking in this regard, whatever may have been the traditions with which they may have been handicapped.

2. The typical rural community is relatively lacking in financial ability to pay for what it should have in the way of an adequate church organization. Students of the rural church maintain that the farmer pays for his church from his profits rather than from his capital. Students of agricultural economics maintain that at the present time only one farmer out of eight is making a profit. Without doubt, the conclusion of the first group should be interpreted to mean that the farmer pays for his church out of what he *thinks* to be his profits. In any case, an impoverished agricultural industry means an inadequate and precarious basis for the financial support of the social and cultural institutions with which the rural community should be supplied.

The doing away with four, or five, or six separate church plants and organizations in the community and the gathering of all of the financial resources into a common fund should make for a great gain in efficiency, even were the total no greater after the union than before. There is good reason for thinking, however, that the amount obtainable would be actually greater under the new plan than under the old. Without doubt many individuals and families who give liberally toward the support of a struggling little church would possibly, and perhaps properly, reduce the amount of their annual contribution, through feeling a lessened responsibility for the success of the larger venture. Some farmer people deny themselves too much for the sake of the church. Others would give more than they do at present because of well-based feeling that more would be gained from the money expended for the unified undertaking. Under the union plan, the church would stand a much better chance of securing financial aid from wealthy donors through the form of endowments and the like.

The rural districts, being less financially able than the urban, should be considered to be properly entitled to aid from urban sources. This aid preferably should not come labeled "missionary funds" or "charity," but as the just due of the country districts. If the church is worth maintaining, it is worthy of an adequate support. The principle of brotherhood should so characterize Christian people everywhere that wealthy parishes would quite naturally pledge themselves to aid in the support of the church organizations of parishes too poor to maintain an adequate organization without such aid.

3. Another difficulty in the way of the development of the ideal religious organization for rural communities is the lack of properly qualified ministers. Whatever the general level of training may be at the present time for the ministry, the men now serving in country parishes are, in general, the most poorly trained men in the profession. In addition to the ministers who are in the country churches because of some combination of poor natural ability and inferior training, there are others who are merely gaining experience in rural churches while awaiting an opportunity to take better positions in the city, and still others who may have in their younger days given good service in the cities but who have been unable to keep up to the urban standard of requirements and are thus glad to take what they may be offered in the way of salary by a country church.

It is obvious that members of the rural ministry at the present time are not favorably enough situated to do themselves justice. They are largely on a part-time nonresident basis and are drawing very low pay, even for what little time they pretend to devote to the work. Many of them are forced to work part of the time at another occupation in order to obtain a living. Usually they are financially unable to provide themselves with the help which they should receive through reading and travel, in order that they may be stimulated to their best effort.

Even the better-trained and better-paid men, who are for the most part employed by city churches, are not well qualified to hold positions of community leadership in either city or country. Theological training has traditionally had little to do with social life. Little attempt has been made in the seminaries to develop an understanding of the everyday problems of living men and women. Such social-problem courses as have been offered to seminary students have stressed the more spectacular problems of urban life at the expense of an analysis of rural social conditions, which is natural, in view of the fact that seminary graduates would be expected to spend most of their years of service in the cities.

The transformation of the situation in rural communities which we are considering should be able to attract more competent men to their service. Seminaries will alter their courses of training to meet the new demand, and capable men can be found to undertake the new work if

salaries are reasonably high, as they may be, owing to the union of church forces in the community.

4. One great danger to be guarded against in the carrying out of such a program as we have been outlining is the danger that the church may be made subservient to the vocational interests of the community. The caste organization of the family-farm system is bound to exercise an influence of greater or lesser strength in the direction of the domination of such cultural forces as it may touch. The church, as well as the school, is in danger of being used to serve vocational ends.

In general, the church of the present time is so weak and lacking in prestige in the rural community that it is little to be feared as a source of farm propaganda. Yet many is the minister who has been urged by some of the more prosperous of his congregation to use his influence to keep their sons from breaking away from the parental occupation. A former graduate student at the University of Michigan, who had spent two years in the rural ministry, wrote as follows in a class paper,

> I came near to being regarded by some of the conservators of the *status quo* of my parish as an undesirable disturber of the peace because I gave to some of the more able of the young people sympathy with their aspirations and suggestions from my own experience.

There is real danger, however, with the increased prestige of the church and the minister that is bound to result through the consolidation of the church forces in a community that the new organization may be used with even greater effect to further vocational ends. It is at least conceivable that ministers will be preferred who will work *for* the existing farm system and *against* the city. If the minister should feel it to be a part of his duty to attempt to keep the more capable young people of his parish from leaving the community and the occupation of agriculture, he would be considered a good teamworker and a good community man by many interested people. From the standpoint, however, of what should be looked for in the church as a great human institution such a minister would not be playing the part expected of him.

It is the business of the church to work in terms of broadly human interests, rather than in those of either vocational or geographical narrowness. It should guard the individual and the community against provincialism in any of its forms rather than allow itself to become an active agent in fostering it. Admittedly, the task of the minister in this regard is not an easy one. He must stand unswervingly for breadth of culture and truth in a community whose prevailing ideas are likely to be traditionally one-sided and prejudiced. He will be accused of not being loyal to rural life and, if he succeeds in the finest way in his ministry, he will do so by convincing his accusers that he is loyal to something greater than either country or city, and he will aid them in developing

for themselves an increased measure of loyalty to the finest values of human experience.

A Study Covering the Birthplaces of Eminent Church Leaders

In Chap. IV, a portion of a study was presented based on *Who's Who in America* indicating some facts regarding the rural-urban distribution of births of eminent Americans. Table II was included, showing the rural-urban distribution of the births of the members of some twelve occupational groups into which the whole number covered by the study were divided. It has seemed desirable to include, in this chapter on religion and the church, a portion of the study which was not covered in Chap. IV and which has hitherto been unpublished.

Of 21,600 covered in the study reported in Chap. IV, 1,924 persons or 8.9 per cent of the total gained their distinction in the field of the church, as indicated in Table II. The church group ranks in ninth place from the standpoint of urban origin among the twelve occupational groups into which the whole number was divided, only 27.18 per cent of the church group having been born in the city as compared with 59.22 per cent of the art group. While the rural part of the total population did not contribute its proportionate share of the church group, it came nearer doing so than it did with eight of the other occupational groups represented. It may be of interest to consider the geographical distribution of birthplaces of members of the church group.

As a part of the study reported in Chap. IV, the occupational distribution of the contributions of sixteen states was analyzed. The states chosen included all of those in each of which as many as 450 individuals of the 21,600 were born. The total numbers furnished by these sixteen states was 16,677, or 77 per cent of the number included in the study. The total number of church leaders furnished by these states was 1,461, or 76 per cent of the number of church leaders included in the study. Table VI shows what percentage each state's contribution to the church group is of its total contribution to the number studied. The states are listed in the order of their urban rank as indicated by the 1870 census, that year being chosen because it is nearer than any other census year to the birth years of all of the individuals included in the study.

As the church group is very largely of rural origin, it might be expected that the more rural states would lead in their degree of specialization in that group. Only three, however, of the eight more rural states are numbered among the upper half of the states as listed in Table VII. The two Southern rural states of Virginia and Kentucky stand first and third in the list, respectively, and the North Central rural state of Indiana stands sixth. The five remaining rural states, Maine, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa are all in the lower half of the list, giving evidence, as far as this study goes, of a relatively small interest in the church.

The church group is the only one of the twelve in which not one of the four North Central states, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa

TABLE VI.—THE PERCENTAGES OF THE TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF CERTAIN STATES TO "WHO'S WHO," FOUND TO BE OF THE CHURCH GROUP

State	Total	Church	Percentage church
Massachusetts	1,931	144	7.45
New York	3,225	254	7.87
New Jersey	542	49	9.04
Maryland	468	39	8.33
Pennsylvania	1,894	240	12.67
Connecticut	576	45	7.81
Missouri	621	54	8.69
Ohio	1,777	177	9.96
Illinois	1,387	102	7.35
Wisconsin	574	28	4.87
Kentucky	450	52	11.55
Maine	491	26	5.29
Michigan	656	45	6.85
Indiana	778	70	8.99
Virginia	622	82	13.18
Iowa	665	54	8.12
Total	16,677	1,461	8.76

TABLE VII.—THE SIXTEEN STATES ARRANGED IN ORDER OF THE PERCENTAGES CONTRIBUTED TO THE CHURCH GROUP

States	Percentage
1. Virginia	13.18
2. Pennsylvania	12.67
3. Kentucky	11.55
4. Ohio	9.96
5. New Jersey	9.04
6. Indiana	8.99
7. Missouri	8.69
8. Maryland	8.33
9. Iowa	8.12
10. New York	7.87
11. Connecticut	7.81
12. Massachusetts	7.45
13. Illinois	7.35
14. Michigan	6.85
15. Maine	5.29
16. Wisconsin	4.87

stands as high as eighth place. All four of them stand higher than eighth as regards the group in science, Iowa standing at the top of the

list, followed by Wisconsin in second place, with Michigan and Illinois in sixth and seventh places, respectively.

The conclusion must be that the prestige of organized religion in these four neighboring North Central states was so low thirty, forty, and fifty years ago that it could not attract into its service its reasonable share of the sort of young men who would later succeed in making their way into the pages of *Who's Who in America.*

The schools did relatively much better, as evidenced by the high proportions of the contribution of each of these four states credited to the science group. The scientists are more largely of urban origin than church leaders, 32 per cent of those included in this study having been born in the city as compared with 27 per cent of the latter, but each of these four rural states of the North Central section has been relatively more successful in the production of scientists than of ministers.

The names listed in *Who's Who* at the present time reflect the developmental conditions of several years ago. There is good reason to believe, however, that the situation now is not more favorable as regards the church than it was a generation ago. School consolidation has gone much further in the North Central states than has church unification. The prestige of the rural teacher and administrator has been enhanced by the process of consolidation. The rural minister has declined in relative, if not in absolute, importance during this period. A capable and ambitious young man in the rural community is more likely than ever before to choose the teacher rather than the preacher as his leader and to begin to prepare himself for a career in education rather than in the church.

CHAPTER XVIII

RURAL HEALTH

As to the importance of good health, there can be no question. The condition of the physical bodies of a population is one vitally important factor in determining the possibilities of the people concerned for a satisfying experience with living. While the mere physical well-being of an individual through the course of a long life may not of itself be of great significance, as a means to the more wholesome social satisfactions it is of extreme importance. It is as true of the individual's physical health as other phases of his existence that he does not live to himself alone. The defective health or shortened life of any member of a community is a matter of social consequence. The growing realization of this fact is in large part responsible for the increasing public concern with matters having to do with the health of the individual.

The relative conservatism of rural people has shown itself in this field as elsewhere in their relations with one another. This conservatism is in part due to rather general ignorance among farmers regarding the nature and importance of health factors as affecting the individual. It is also in part a result of the highly individualized (or familized) nature of rural social life. Because of their conservative inclinations in the field of health, farming people, in general, are less well supplied with social aids of various types to guard them against dangers to their physical well-being than is the case with urban dwellers. Farming people may or may not be healthier as a rule than the remainder of the population. Whether they are or not is of relatively small significance. The important fact is that the country population has not given itself a fair chance to take advantage of the natural health resources with which it is provided. There is, of course, nothing at all surprising in this fact. It is as true of occupational groups as of individuals that they cannot live at all completely if cut off from fairly close association with others. At the present time the rural death rate is falling and the level of general rural health is apparently rising, owing very definitely to the leadership and the cooperative efforts given by urban individuals and groups. The leadership in most fields of achievement for the national population as a whole must for certain very obvious reasons develop in the cities.

While the death rate for all causes is higher for urban areas than for rural, certain of the causes of death are at the present time more important in the small communities than in the large. A study of the 1927 volume

of mortality statistics reveals the fact that among the causes of death the following are some of those in which the rural rate is higher than the urban:

TABLE VIII.—COMPARATIVE DEATH RATE STATISTICS[1]

Death rate from all causes (exclusive of stillbirths) per 1,000 estimated population

Year	Cities in registration area	Rural parts of the registration area (including towns and cities up to 10,000 in population)
1920	14.1	11.9
1923	13.2	11.5
1924	12.8	10.9
1925	12.9	10.7
1926	13.4	11.1
1927	12.5	10.4

[1] U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Mortality Statistics*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1927.

1. For epidemic, endemic, and infectious diseases as a whole, the rural death rate is higher than the urban. Certain specific diseases in this group in which the rural rate exceeds the urban are the following: typhoid and paratyphoid fever, malaria, measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough, influenza, dysentery, and tuberculosis (especially of the respiratory system).

2. While the urban rate exceeds the rural for general diseases not included in the above class, in this group, cancer of the skin and pernicious anemia are more common causes of death among rural than among urban people.

3. For diseases of nervous system and of the organs of special sense, as a whole, the rural rate is higher than the urban. Among the specific diseases in this group in which the rural rate exceeds the urban are cerebral hemorrhage, paralysis without specific causes, general paralysis of the insane, and epilepsy.

4. While the urban rate is higher than the rural for diseases of the respiratory system, asthma, in this group, is a more common cause of death in the smaller communities than in the larger.

5. Among diseases of the digestive system, the rural rate is higher than the urban for diseases of the stomach, other than ulcer and cancer, also for diarrhea and enteritis.

6. Among diseases having to do with childbirth, the rate for puerperal albuminuria is higher in the rural areas.

7. Among diseases of the skin and of the cellular tissue, gangrene is more largely rural than urban.

8. Among deaths due to malformations, congenital malformation of the heart is more frequently noted for rural than urban regions.

9. Among diseases of early infancy, congenital debility has a higher rural than urban rate.

10. Old age (senility) has a higher rural than urban rate.

11. External causes, including suicide, homicide, and accident, are responsible for a higher death rate in the larger communities. Certain forms of suicide are responsible for a higher death rate in the smaller communities.

12. Ill-defined causes are responsible for a higher rural rate of death.

It is, without doubt, of value to consider the comparative death rates of rural and urban parts of the national population. It is not clear, however, what their significance may be as applied to the farming class. The mortality statistics as given in the census reports draw the line between rural and urban at 10,000. With the line thus placed, the rural parts of the registration area show a lower death rate than the urban. It has been shown that the rural population, with a line between rural and urban drawn at 8,000, is very far from being homogeneous, viewed from the standpoint of productivity of men of distinction. The small towns have been *more* productive of such individuals than have the cities, while the farms have been *less* productive than the cities. It may be that the rural population, with a line drawn at 10,000, is as greatly lacking in homogeneity as regards health and longevity.

In any case, it will not do at all to list good health as a characteristic of farm life, as is so frequently done in opposition to poor health in the cities, and bid those who value good health and long life to get themselves homes in the country. It is not essentially a problem of country *versus* city at all and would not be so even were the line between rural and urban drawn in such a way as to separate farm dwellers from all others. Even in that case, the two groups would not be homogeneous, and statistical tables which would treat them as such would be misleading.

It is obvious that, if a person or a family experiences good health, it is due to a certain fortunate combination of factors which may be developed in either country or city. There are many healthy people in both places. Even if it could be shown that there is a higher proportion of healthy people living on farms than in the towns, this would not justify the statement that agricultural life is essentially a more healthful life than the non-agricultural.

Life may be more accurately described in terms of occupational classes than in those of size of community in which one chances to live (see Chap. IV). The upper classes of a city, the professional and business classes, seem to be on the whole healthier than the farming class. The reason for the poor showing of the city as a whole when compared with rural communities is due to the high proportion of hand laborers in the city. Thus it follows that, when a country person is contemplating moving to the city and is considering the matter of comparative prob-

abilities of good health, it is essential for him to consider what his occupational and home surroundings would be in the city. If city life for him would mean living in a crowded, dark, and poorly ventilated tenement, working in a factory also dark and poorly ventilated, and possibly under conditions subjecting him to the influence of occupational poisons, with an income so low that he would be unable to provide himself with a sufficient amount of nourishing food, the health risk of his leaving the ordinary farm for the city would surely be great. If, upon the other hand, he would be located as to living quarters and working conditions, whether in a business or professional calling or at hand labor, so that he might be reasonably sure of plenty of sunlight and fresh air and good food, along with certain health advantages not traditionally obtaining on farms, such as regularity of hours of labor, freedom from occasional periods of overstrain, protection from undue exposure to the elements, sufficient leisure, and good facilities for frequent and wholesome recreative activities, nearness to a competent physician, along with the willingness to go to him for examination at the first sign of ill health—under such conditions, his removal to the city would probably increase his chances for good health and long life.

Farm Health Assets

Much more has been said of the health advantages which the farmer is supposed to enjoy than of the disadvantages which very largely characterize his occupation. The advantages, as far as they go, are very real. They are the sort of characteristics, however, which are very easily noted by the most superficial observer, and they are likely to be greatly overstressed by the person who is attempting to make out a good case for farm life.

The person from the city driving through the country on a pleasant day and in more or less of a vacation mood may, if at all given to contemplation, see in the life of a farmer the following health advantages: plenty of fresh air and sunshine; physical exercise, most of which is not overly strenuous and performed largely out of doors; nearness to the source of an abundant food supply; relative isolation from human carriers of contagious diseases; and relative absence of confusion and noise which are so largely characteristic of life in the city.

Farm Health Liabilities

The health disadvantages characterizing farm life and work are less readily seen by one who has not given considerable thought to the matter. Some of the more important of them are the following:

1. Exposure to the Weather.—The farmer is in the field not solely on bright pleasant days of moderate temperature but in every sort of weather. Wet and dry days, hot and cold, his work calls him to the

out-of-doors where he must meet whatever climatic conditions nature happens to be providing at the time. Sudden changes of temperature are to be taken for granted, and these are likely to carry with them unfortunate consequences to all excepting those possessed of most rugged natures. It may be that the high incidence of cancer of the skin in rural districts is, as some authorities believe, at least partly due to the exposure incidental to farm work. It may also be the case that much of the rheumatism and troubles affecting bones and joints may be traced to this source.

As farmhouses are likely, too, to be very unevenly heated, the unfortunate effects of exposure to the weather are not always limited to the out-of-doors aspects of farm life.

2. Unevenness of Work Effort Required.—The nature of the farming occupation is such that the physical effort which must be expended is very unequally distributed throughout the year. There are periods of relative idleness interspersed with others of intense activity in which all hands must exert themselves to somewhere near the limit of their working capacity. As the farmers' occupation is very largely unstandardized, individual men at times of apparently unusual need are likely to yield to the temptation to overexert themselves, as regards either the number of consecutive hours of labor or the amount which they will attempt to accomplish in a given period of time, involving unaccustomed rapidity of movement or possibly the lifting of heavier objects than they are accustomed to handle. The fact that the individual farmer so largely works alone leads in many cases to his overstraining himself in moving heavy objects about. Often, too, the women and children of the family are called upon to aid in work of this sort for which they are entirely unsuited. The results of physical overstrain in the farming occupation are likely to be most disastrous to the individuals affected.

3. Improper Diet.—While the farm family, in general, has a sufficient amount of food, it does not inevitably follow that farming people are well fed. There are obstacles both in the nature of the farmer's occupation and relatively isolated type of life and, more especially, in the force of family-farm tradition which tends to prevent the development of good dietary habits.

Traditionally, farming people like to live from their own land, buying very little food. Even were there no traditions, it would seem to many of them to be uneconomical to purchase articles of food when from their own farms could be supplied a *sufficient quantity* of things to eat. It thus follows that the farm dietary is likely to be lacking in sufficient variety. Were farmers to understand, better than most of them do, the essentials of the well-balanced diet and were they, as far as possible, to attempt to raise a sufficient quantity of the right things on their land to supply the home table, they would fare better than usually is the

case. The farmer, however, is apt to neglect the family food needs in his interest in what seems to him to be the more important business of raising for the market. This neglect is due seemingly to a combination of ignorance and carelessness.

Traditionally, too, in many farm families, the best of the farm produce never finds its way to the home table. The choicest portions are carried to market; the family food is made up of second-rate vegetables and fruits, the culls, things that are relatively unsalable and sometimes even partially decayed.

Finally, the food is very likely to be improperly cooked. Tradition has much to do with the cooking methods in use in farm families. It is the general testimony, for example, of those who know the situation that fried foods have altogether too large a place in the farm dietary. If this be true, it is so, supposedly, because of the force of tradition influencing both the women who prepare the food, and the family as a whole who eat it. When they were children, farm adults learned to like their food prepared in a certain way; and while still young, farm wives learned to prepare the food in that same way. Innovations are likely to be frowned down, whether the innovator chances to be a daughter who has taken cooking lessons or a son who has developed "fancy food notions" in his contacts outside the home.

Much of the ill health of farming people is very definitely due to improper food habits which involve the use of foods of poor quality, an ill-balanced diet, or foods improperly prepared.

4. Insanitary Conditions.—The farmhouse is more than likely to be a dangerous place in which to live because of its insanitary surroundings. In only about 5 per cent of the cases are farm homes provided with systems for adequate sewage disposal. In a large proportion of cases, too, the buildings housing the stock are not far removed from the house in which the food is prepared and in which the family eats and sleeps. Unless the house is well screened, the dangers from these sources of infection are great. Often, too, the well water is made unsafe for drinking because of the nearness of the well to sources of contamination.

5. Close Association with Non-human Disease Carriers.—Animals as well as men may carry about with them the germs of dangerous diseases and through contact with men may infect them. While the farmer is to a fairly high degree isolated from other men and thus is relatively free from certain types of disease which are more readily transmitted in the cities, he works in close association with various animals and runs a constant danger of being infected by them. In addition to the animals which he keeps upon the farm and cares for, flies and other insect bearers of disease which act as intermediate hosts are to be found.

Certain of the primary diseases of domesticated animals which are carried to men secondarily are the following: tuberculosis of cattle and hogs, tetanus, or lockjaw, enteritis, anthrax, glanders, foot and mouth disease, plague, tularemia, and rabies.[1]

6. Accidents.—The general opinion would be that farming is an occupation almost entirely free from physical injuries owing to accidents. The relative simplicity of the farmer's life; the fact that so much of his labor is hand labor and performed under conditions that seem to make possible the exercise of great care for his physical safety; the additional fact that such accidents as do occur on farms are almost entirely devoid of anything savoring of the spectacular and thus are not given space in the papers that most people read—all these are sufficient reason for the general belief that serious accidents seldom occur on farms.

As a matter of fact, minor accidents are of very frequent occurrence, and those of major importance are not at all rare. This has always been the case in agriculture. The handling of farm animals is attended by danger, and working with the more simple horse-drawn implements such as the plow and the harrow is not in the least free from elements of personal risk. The rapid development and increasingly widespread use of modern farm machinery, such, for example, as the corn shredder and the ensilage cutter, have very greatly increased the possibility of accidental injury.

In the manufacturing plants of the more highly organized non-agricultural industries, much attention has been given to protective devices and guards of various kinds to reduce danger of accident. Little thought has been given to anything of this nature as regards the farmer and his work. Even were there agitation for an increase in safety devices for farm machinery, their installation would be rendered relatively difficult because of the individualistic nature of the farmer's work and of his attitude toward life. Even factory workers frequently object to the use of safety devices and sometimes submit to them only under protest. The farmer with his traditional disregard of physical discomfort and danger would be quite certain to resent anything in the way of social control intended to make his conditions of labor more comfortable and safe.

The fact that the farmer is not primarily a machinist but works with machinery only a comparatively small portion of the time, and then very likely with several different types of machines, naturally tends to increase his danger. Many accidents on farms are due to the unfamiliarity of the operator with his machine and possibly as many more to a general mechanical awkwardness which entirely unfits the individual for getting along at all well with machinery.

[1] Smiley, D. F., and A. G. Gould, *Community Hygiene*, Chap. III, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929.

Mechanical aptitude was not an essential qualification of those who founded the farming population of America. Urban selection has been carrying to the cities for some decades large numbers of the more mechanically apt individuals, depleting the rural population of much of such ability with which it was originally supplied. Farming operations recently suffered a marked change in the direction of greater use of highly complicated machinery. It is to be wondered at that the number of serious injuries resulting because of the change has been no higher than it has apparently been.

Insurance companies consider the accident risk of the farmer great enough to warrant placing him in the so-called "hazardous" group of risks, with only one other group, the extra hazardous, to whom the cost of insurance is greater. Little can be gathered, however, as to the actual danger of serious accidents on the farms from the classification made by insurance companies. The high rate for insurance is in part due to the fact that an incapacitated farmer is likely for psychological reasons to remain incapacitated longer than are those individuals whose regular income is cut off when they are unable to work.

Gillette discusses the accident situation as regards child farm laborers in North Dakota, referring to a study made by the federal Children's Bureau. He says,

> Of the 845 children in the several representative counties studied, 104 had been injured in accidents which occurred during work. Twelve reported broken arms, legs, or other bones; five reported dislocations; two, sprains; seven had been crushed or badly bruised; fifteen had bad cuts or lacerations; the remainder could not tell specifically the nature of the injury. In this last group were children who could give only such accounts of their injuries as "kicked by cow, could not walk for six weeks"; "fell from header box, which went over my head, laid up for a month"; "fell from horse, unconscious five hours."
>
> In handling farm implements, the greatest number of accidents was associated with plowing. Raking hay, of course with a horse rake, ranked next. These kinds of work are not inherently so dangerous as threshing, mowing, running harvester, disking, and perhaps other activities. The greater number of accidents accompanying them is doubtless due to the fact that irresponsible children are sent out into the fields alone to operate the machines, whereas in the case of operating the other machines mentioned, they are not allowed to do the more dangerous divisions of labor or are associated with older persons while working.[1]

Walter W. Armentrout in *Child Labor on Farms* says: "It is more of an accident that a child does not get injured by farm machinery than that he does. Many adult farmers carry the marks of injuries by farm machinery." Mr. Armentrout gives several specific illustrations of

[1] GILLETTE, JOHN M., *Rural Sociology*, p. 294, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1928.

types of injury to children received while at work on farms in West Virginia.[1]

Conditions similar to those in North Dakota and West Virginia undoubtedly exist in all of our agricultural states. Children as members of the family-farm labor force are very likely more subject to physical injury than are adults, owing to their lack of strength and experience. Adults, however, are by no means immune. Owing to lack of specialized mechanical ability, to lack of protective devices, and to the nature of the industry even when carried on under the most favorable conditions, the accident rate is high.

7. Deficient Medical Care.—This topic will be treated more fully in a later section. Suffice it to be said at this point that rural communities in general, as contrasted with urban, are inadequately supplied with medical care. There is a shortage of physicians, dentists, and public-health nurses. There are also too few hospitals in the country areas, nearly half of the rural counties in America being without them.

8. Prevalence of Traditional Attitudes toward Pain and Physical Discomfort.—One of the greatest handicaps of the farming population as regards matters of health consists in the fact that pioneer traditions having to do with pain and physical discomfort still prevail to a large extent. It is too often considered a virtue to endure minor forms of ill health uncomplainingly. Farm-born children are likely to be praised for an apparent ignoring of physical discomfort. When these children become adults, they tend to pass these attitudes along to the next generation. It is among many farming people felt to be a mark of their superiority over the "softer" people of the cities that they do not need to be so frequently "coddled" by doctors, nurses, and the like.

Because of this attitude among farmers, many of them spend most of their possibly long lives in relatively poor health, when a little medical attention received at the right time might have made them completely well. Often, too, slight ailments neglected grow by imperceptible stages into much more serious conditions which might never have developed had medical aid been secured during the early stages.

9. Confining Nature of Farm Work.—One factor contributing strongly to the attitude just discussed is the confining nature of work on the typical farm. To a greater extent than is true of any other occupation, the chief laborers, the farmer and his wife, must remain constantly at their tasks if the business undertaking is to go forward in the normal way. At certain periods of the year it would in many cases be true that two or three consecutive days' absence from work would prove extremely disastrous. If stock is kept, as is usually done, daily attention is needed,

[1] ARMENTROUT, W. W., "Child Labor on Farms," *Rural Child Welfare*, p. 80, National Child Labor Committee, New York, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922.

even through the less busy months of the year. This being the case, the farm individual is likely to remain at his post when he is too ill to work without incurring serious health risks to himself. Nothing less than a condition of absolute physical inability to proceed is sufficient to cause many farming people, both men and women, to drop their accustomed work and call upon the doctor for aid. Lives could be lengthened and years of invalidism avoided if farm men and women could as readily leave their work for a few days at a time for the sake of rest and medical treatment as can most people in other occupations.

The difficulty is to a large extent psychological. Even where farmers and farm wives are so situated that they might with entire safety leave their work for a time in charge of older children or others, they are likely because of definitely established habits to refuse to do this until they suffer complete breakdown. The family-farm tradition that makes the work personal is largely, if not wholly, at fault in maintaining such habits of thought.

10. Child Labor.—One of the more serious dangers of child labor, which is such an essential part of the family-farm institution, is to the health of the children. Unless the child's future is constantly kept uppermost in the minds of the parents and is thus not allowed to be jeopardized by his activities while yet a child, his physical health may be impaired. In the rush of pressing work which faces the farm family, especially at certain times of the year, the children's health needs may be completely lost sight of in the whole family's striving for immediate results. Many farm children, both boys and girls, arrive at adulthood with bent and twisted bodies or with their physical natures otherwise in such a condition that they will never be able to enjoy the quality of health for which a proper rearing would have prepared them.

Certain Aspects of the Rural Medical Situation

One of the chief disadvantages of life on a typically situated farm consists in the fact that the nearest doctor is a considerable distance away. This is a double disadvantage. In the first place, much valuable time may be lost in an emergency before the doctor can arrive. In the second place, because of the distance he must travel to and from the farm home, his visits are expensive.

A recent questionnaire study conducted by the *Farmer's Wife Magazine* and reported in *Rural America* by Carroll P. Streeter furnishes certain valuable statistics covering several items in the rural medical situation. The questionnaires of 860 farm women of the many who cooperated in the investigation were selected at random and provide the basis of the study.[1]

[1] Streeter, Carroll P., "The Rural Medical Situation," *Rural America*, January, 1930.

The average distance to the nearest doctor is a bit over 7 miles, and the average charge made for a home call is $7.63. On the average, the time required for the nearest doctor to reach the farm home in the summer is 30 minutes, while in the winter, 56 minutes is required. The length of time required is not in the least surprising if one interprets the statistics to mean that on the average the doctor arrives in the summer at a farm home 7 miles distant from his office only 30 minutes after receiving the call. A considerable time, on the average, is needed even if the case of illness is in town only three or four blocks away from the doctor's residence or office. The time required for a country drive must be added to the length of time required to make a town call. Circumstances obviously alter cases greatly. If the call be of an emergency nature, supposedly the doctor will respond as promptly as possible; but if, when the word is sent in, this nearest doctor is busily occupied, for example, on an obstetrical case 7 or more miles from town in the opposite direction, the wait before he can possibly arrive is likely to be one of heartbreaking length. From the standpoint of the doctor, the charge of a dollar a mile cannot be considered excessive when one realizes the amount of business in town which he may lose while making a country call. From the standpoint of the farm family, however, living 7 miles from the doctor's office, the situation is most unsatisfactory. Both as regards the time required to get the services of a physician when they may be most desperately needed and as regards the expense involved if many calls are needed, the family on the farm is at a great disadvantage when compared with those in town.

Obviously many farm families are less fortunately situated than are those whose location is an average one as regards distance from the doctor. Eight per cent of the farm women reporting live 15 miles or more from the nearest doctor. With more than 11 per cent of the families, an hour or more in the summer, and two hours or more in the winter, must elapse before the doctor arrives. In the case of more than 13 per cent of the families, the charge for a home call is $15 or more. In other words, one farm family in every eight must pay $15 or more each time a doctor is called to their home or else be recipients of charity. In this fact can readily be seen one reason why some farmers delay calling a doctor longer than they should from the standpoint of the welfare of the one who is ill, and why in other cases individuals who are so ill that they should not be moved are taken considerable distances to town in order that the charge may be merely that for an office visit.

For those living in town, the charge for a home call is so little more than that for an office visit that the likelihood is fairly strong that the condition of the one who is ill will be very influential in determining whether he goes to the doctor or the doctor goes to him. If, as is the case with most farmers, the difference in the amount charged is one of

several dollars, in many cases $10 or more, the condition of the patient cannot be such an important determining factor. The average charge for an office visit as shown in the *Farmer's Wife* study is $1.59. Thus the difference in the amount charged in the case of the average farm family is in the neighborhood of $6.

Certain other facts discovered through the *Farmer's Wife* investigation are the following: The average distance of the farm home from the nearest ear, eye, nose, and throat specialist is 27.6 miles, while in 15.2 per cent of the cases the distance is 50 or more miles. The average distance to the nearest dentist is 14.25 miles, while in 9.6 per cent of the cases the distance is 20 or more miles. The average distance to the nearest hospital is 17.9 miles, while 5.1 per cent of farm families are located at least 50 miles away from a hospital. The average distance to the nearest drug store is 11 miles, while 5.5 per cent live at least 20 miles from one. In 17.6 per cent of the questionnaires, the answer to the question, "Are nurses available for care of sick within 12 hours?" was in the negative. The question, "Was a doctor called when the last baby was born?" was answered by 4.3 per cent in the negative. In 64 per cent of the cases, the children have annual health inspection in school. The total expense of sickness during the previous year averaged $104.94, as compared with the $62 average found in Kirkpatrick's study of 2,886 families.[1]

It is very likely that the group of farmers who cooperated in the investigation carried out by the *Farmer's Wife* are not as representative of the nation as a whole as is Kirkpatrick's group. They cooperated by filling out questionnaires having to do solely with matters of health; hence it is reasonable to suppose that they were somewhat of a select group from the standpoint of interest in medical care. A larger proportion of them, for example, than would be true of the nation as a whole would call a physician to take charge of a confinement case. The average amount spent annually for medical care by such a group would be higher than that spent on the average by the farming population as a whole.

Decreasing Number of Doctors in Rural Communities

Various studies have been made which indicate that the number of physicians located in rural communities has tended during the past two decades or so to decrease in proportion to the population. For the country as a whole, the number of members of the population to each physician apparently is increasing. During the 17-year period 1906–1923, exclusive of New England, which was not included in the study, the number increased from 674 to 765, or more than 13 per cent.[2] The

[1] Kirkpatrick, E. L., *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, p. 140, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1926.

[2] Mayers, Lewis, and L. V. Harrison, *The Distribution of Physicians in the United States*, p. 47, General Education Board, New York, 1924.

proportionate decline, however, was considerably greater for the small communities than for the large. During the period just mentioned, in places which in 1910 and 1920 had a population of less than 1,000, the number of persons to each physician increased from 997 to 1,238, an increase of more than 24 per cent. For places with a population of between 1,000 and 2,500, the increase was from 590 to 910, or more than 54 per cent. For cities of over 1,000,000 population, the increase was from 492 to 536, or a little less than 8 per cent.

The tendency toward the concentration of the nation's doctors in the larger cities is indicated in Table IX.

TABLE IX.—RELATIVE NUMBER OF PHYSICIANS IN PLACES OF VARIOUS SIZES COMPARED WITH RELATIVE NUMBER IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE, 1906 AND 1923 (NEW ENGLAND NOT INCLUDED)

Places having (in 1900 and 1920 respectively) a population of	Percentage which relative number of physicians forms of relative number in country as a whole	
	1906	1923
Less than 1,000	67.6	61.6
1,000 to 2,500	114.0	84.0
2,500 to 5,000	118.0	101.9
5,000 to 10,000	113.0	110.9
10,000 to 25,000	117.9	105.8
25,000 to 50,000	127.0	117.9
50,000 to 100,000	112.8	121.6
More than 100,000	137.0	142.0

Certain facts are readily apparent from a study of the table. In the first place, it is evident that in 1906 the places of less than 1,000 population were the only ones having less than their proportionate share of doctors, when the proportion of the total population which the residents of such places make up is considered. In 1923, these places were still less well supplied with physicians than at the earlier date, when proportionate numbers are taken into account. The greatest proportionate decline, however, during the 17-year interval occurred with the places having a population of from 1,000 to 2,500. At the earlier date, these places have 14 per cent *more* than their proportionate share, while in 1923 they had 16 per cent *less* than their share. The two groups of cities having more than 50,000 population were the only types of places to show a proportionate gain during the period under consideration, the larger gain being indicated for the cities with populations of between 50,000 and 100,000.

It is not safe to assume on the basis of the figures just presented that the residents of smaller communities are discriminated against in the matter of the distribution of physicians more than they are as regards other social conveniences to which, in general, the people of the cities have more ready access. At a time of serious illness or other health emergency, the farm family would consider it convenient to have a competent doctor as close at hand as would be the case were they living in town. The relatively isolated life of the farmer, however, makes it impracticable for him to be provided with such a convenience. In accepting the *natural* health advantages of the open country, he must give up a certain number of *social* health advantages, one of which is easy access to a physician.

Even in 1906, before the automobile had come into general use, farmers were driving considerable distances when they felt the need of obtaining services which could not be supplied in their immediate neighborhood. At that time a considerable part of the practice of many doctors who lived in places of from 1,000 to 2,500 population and in those of from 2,500 to 5,000 must have been devoted to residents of the open country, and to those of small villages of fewer than a 1,000 residents. The automobile's being in such general use as it was by 1923 is possibly a sufficient explanation for the decreased numbers of physicians in the smaller communities, in proportion to their population. Those country people who in the horse-and-buggy days were accustomed to going some distance to consult a doctor could now more easily go still farther from home if they had reason to believe that the physicians in the larger towns were better worth patronizing. The large-town physician could travel much farther into the country to make calls than was previously possible. It is also true that with the use of the automobile those doctors who are located in the small places, and whose practice involves a great deal of country driving, may serve a much larger number of families than would have been possible with the older means of transportation.

Another reason for a decreased number of country and small-town physicians consists in the fact that there is less illness at the present time among farmers, of the sort that would incline the farm families to call a doctor, than there was two or three decades ago. The almost complete eradication of typhoid and malaria have tremendously decreased the business of the country doctor. Then, too, surgery cases that were formerly cared for in the home are now pretty generally, as a matter of course, taken to a hospital in one of the larger cities, in which, as statistics indicate, the number of physicians has been increasing at a rate disproportionate to the increase of population. Maternity cases in rapidly increasing numbers go to the hospital now, there to be handled by some one other than the home-town doctor. It is not surprising that as a part of the centralization process in general characterizing our life at

present the medical profession should become more and more centered in the larger cities; and this does not necessarily involve a decreased adequacy of care for those living in the country.

Inadequate Medical Care in Certain Districts

While a decreased number of doctors in rural areas in proportion to the population is, as has been indicated, not in itself a matter to cause alarm, if the diminishing process has proceeded in such a way as to leave certain farm families entirely without the services of a physician in time of need, the situation is indeed a serious one. Certain studies have shown that such is the case with many farming communities in America. Several whole counties, in fact, are entirely without the services of resident physicians. While many families living in such counties are without doubt located reasonably near physicians who reside in an adjoining county, in certain cases in their trading center, many others are bound to be most unfortunately situated in this regard. Even if there be one or two physicians in a county numbering several thousand people, it is reasonable to conclude that medical care in such a county is inadequate.

The Committee on Medical Service of the conference of state and provincial health authorities of North America reported at the meeting held in Maine in 1923 that the conditions at the time varied "from serious to desperate" in at least thirty of the states. Not only was there shown to be an alarming scarcity of doctors in many rural areas. It was indicated as well that a disproportionate number of the country practitioners were men who had not recently had their training, being of middle age or older.

Professor C. R. Hoffer has made a most valuable study covering these matters for Michigan.[1] He has shown that while the number of persons per physician for the entire state is 1,044, in certain of the rural counties the number is much greater than this. In eight counties of the eighty-three in the state, there are more than 2,000 persons for each physician. In two of the eight there are more than 2,500 per physician. One of the two, a county with a population numbering but two persons less than a total of 5,000, has but one resident physician. As the three counties adjoining this one of highest total themselves have an average of 1,180 persons for each physician, it is not to be supposed that they have much surplus of medical facilities to contribute to their neighbor county in which there seems to be the greatest deficiency. A block of six counties in the east central part of the state averages 1,687 persons to every physician. One must conclude that these figures indicate a condition of

[1] Hoffer, Charles R., "Public Health and Educational Services in Michigan," *Special Bulletin* 207, Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State College January, 1931.

inadequacy of medical care for many people in the six counties having a total population of more than 118,000, unless one is ready to conclude instead that most of the counties of the state have too many physicians. Such a conclusion is untenable in view of the fact, for example, that New York in 1928 had one physician for every 649 of its population. In the counties outside of New York City, which had 549 people for every physician, there was a doctor on the average for every 812 members of the population.[1]

Professor Hoffer found, too, that the average age of the doctors in the small towns of Michigan was considerably higher than that of the urban practitioners. In the towns of less than 5,000 population, 37 per cent of the physicians for whom data were available were under fifty years of age, as contrasted with 63 per cent who were fifty years of age or older. In a group of 606 physicians chosen at random from the two largest cities of Michigan, Detroit and Grand Rapids, 71 per cent were under fifty, while only 29 per cent were fifty or older. Eleven per cent of the small-town doctors were at least seventy years old, while this was true of only 2 per cent of the large-city physicians. It thus appears that not only have the large cities of Michigan more physicians in proportion to the population but, in addition to this, a much larger proportion of the large-city physicians have recently received their training. Stated the other way about, the rural community and smaller towns of Michigan, in which conditions may be supposed to be fairly typical of the states in the same section of the country, apparently are in part served by an inadequate number of physicians, a disproportionate percentage of whom are past middle age. The older men are likely to be less well informed as to the latest advances in medical science than are those who are younger. Notwithstanding the fact that their lack in this regard may be considerably offset by the possession of knowledge which comes only through long experience, the conclusion seems to be inevitable that the quality of medical service suffers in rural districts, in part because of the age distribution of the men in the profession.

Age Distribution of Physicians as between Rural and Urban Communities

In both the small towns and the large cities, according to Hoffer's Michigan study, there exists an abnormal age distribution of medical practitioners. In the towns of 5,000 population and under approximately half of the doctors are fifty-four years of age or older. In the two largest cities, upon the other hand, approximately half are forty-one years of age or younger. The young men during the past 20 years or so have obviously upon their graduation from medical school been entering

[1] Lawrence, Joseph S., "A Study of the Distribution of Physicians in the Rural Districts of New York State," *New York State Journal of Medicine*, August 15, 1929.

practice in the cities in greatly disproportionate numbers. The large cities during this period have been growing rapidly. Young doctors have been establishing themselves there at a rate even more rapid than the growth of the cities. The small-town and open-country populations have in many instances been declining, and in others they have barely held their own or have experienced very small increases. The middle-aged doctors and those who are older remain in their country practice. Many of the younger men left for the city. New men fresh from medical school have not gone to small towns in sufficient numbers to replace the older men as they retire and the younger men who have been going to the cities. As has been indicated above, complete replacement, to the end that no decline in the number of doctors practicing in small towns would have been experienced, could not have been expected or desired. So few new men, however, have gone to the rural communities that the situation at present in many sections can only be described as one to cause alarm.

Reasons for the Insufficient Number of Young Doctors in the Small Communities

The shortage of country doctors is not among the older men, those over fifty. It is young men who are lacking. More are needed, not only to give present service but to take the places of the older men as they pass from the scene. Since 11 per cent of the physicians in towns of under 5,000 are seventy years of age or older, as has been shown to be the case in Michigan, this latter need is plainly an urgent one.

One of the chief reasons for the failure of young physicians to settle in larger numbers in the rural communities is plainly enough the economic one. While it is to the advantage of the individual farm family and of society in general to have doctors distributed about over rural areas in large enough numbers and so placed, as regards distances from one another, that every family may in its time of need secure expert medical aid within a reasonably short time, it does not at all necessarily follow that the doctors would find it financially possible to locate themselves so. While the ideal of service rather than that of financial gain undoubtedly is the dominating professional motive, this fact does not and should not prevent the young doctor from locating himself where he has reason to believe the economic returns will be high enough to make possible a satisfactory standard of living for himself and family. While on the average, there are 1,044 persons for every physician in the state of Michigan, there must be within the state many rural areas each containing a population of that size that would not give a resident physician enough paid practice to make it financially profitable for one to settle there.

While those people in no better than moderate circumstances are likely to have at least their full share of ill health, they are not so likely

to summon the doctor in time of illness, or to be able to pay for his services in case they make use of them, as are people who are more comfortably situated. Therefore, the wealthier communities are quite sure to have a larger number of doctors in proportion to the population than are the communities less wealthy. Raymond Pearl concludes as a result of a study having to do with this matter that the addition of $100 to the average per capita wealth of a district is sufficient to attract one additional doctor for each 30,000 of population into that district, and that, conversely, the decrease of $100 in the average per capita wealth is sufficient to eliminate one doctor from the district for every 30,000 population.[1] The rural areas of Michigan and of other states would be more adequately supplied with doctors if they were in better financial circumstances than they are.

Even if the young doctor making his decision where to settle were assured of an income in the country equal to what he might expect to receive in a city, there are reasons easy to understand why many of them would choose in favor of the city. In the first place, medical-school students are largely from the city, accustomed to thinking in terms of life and practice in communities of the sort in which their childhood days were spent. The increased expensiveness of the medical course in recent years is in part responsible for decreasing the proportion of students from the farms. More and more it is the sons of relatively well-to-do business and professional men who are entering medical school. It is not surprising that these young men do not look with favor upon the idea of engaging in country practice.

There is also the fact that most medical students from both urban and rural communities are trained in fairly large cities. Elevated standards in the matter of medical training have served, among other things, to eliminate many of the smaller schools located in the small towns. Having secured his training in the large city, the medical graduate naturally prefers to practice under large-city conditions, with easy access to modern hospital facilities and the assured assistance of trained nurses when this is desired. In the city, too, there is a better opportunity than in the small town for developing a practice in the field of his special interests and for stimulating contact with professional colleagues.

Then, too, there is the fact that the doctor in a small town, however well trained and efficient he may be, is likely to be considered by many members of the community to be inferior to the physicians of the larger cities. An increasing number of farming and small-town people, owing to better means of transportation and increased familiarity with the city, will patronize the home-town doctor only in cases of emergency and for

[1] PEARL, RAYMOND, "Distribution of Physicians in the United States," *American Medical Association Journal*, April 4, 1925.

what they consider minor ailments and will take their more important health problems, the ones requiring a larger expenditure of money, to the more widely known men of the city. Even in case the resident physician succeeds in making a satisfactory income, the fact that his location in a small town is likely to make him be considered second rate is sufficient to drive many of the more capable and ambitious men to the cities.

Finally, the young doctor is likely to be attracted to the city by the same social forces that draw other young people into the urban communities. The educational, recreational, and cultural advantages of city life make the same appeal to doctors and their families as they do to other people in the professional classes, such as teachers and ministers. The situation as regards medicine, however, differs greatly from that in the fields of education and religion. Because of group organization of the educational and religious activities in a community, including the raising of more or less definite amounts of money to be paid in salary, teachers and ministers, of a sort, may be induced to fill the vacancies made by the resignation or removal of the former incumbents. Boards of education and church committees are held responsible for keeping the positions filled; and they proceed, supposedly, to find the best individuals available for the amount that they can afford to pay. Because of a lack of group action as regards medicine, physicians may, through their removal to larger cities, leave their former patients inadequately provided with medical care, there being, in general, no organized efforts to bring into the community a successor to the one who has gone. The situation is likely to be especially bad if the one who has gone was the only physician in the community. If there be a sufficient economic basis to support a doctor, the vacancy is likely to be filled in the course of time. In the interval, however, the situation is somewhat analogous to that of a town suddenly deprived for a time of a fire department. In case of emergency, help will come in from some neighboring place, but it is likely to be disastrously late in its arrival.

Community Responsibility for Maintaining Medical Service

As it is to the interest of every community to have readily available a physician who may be depended upon to render necessary service in time of health emergency, it seems to be clearly the task of each community to bear the responsibility for providing itself with a well-qualified man in case the unorganized methods so generally prevalent are not successful in this. There is good reason for arguing that the provision of medical service should be a community function rather than a matter for a small minority of the families within the community. Every family within the community benefits from the presence of a physician. Even those families who seldom, or never, have reason to patronize him

profit through the assurance that a doctor is at hand. Notwithstanding this fact, the physician receives his entire income in the form of fees paid to him by only a part of even the persons he has been called upon to treat in time of illness, a certain number of families in nearly every community, not always limited to those who are unable to pay, managing to avoid the payment of their doctor's bills. Those other families who are fortunate enough to go through a year without suffering from ill health to such an extent as to involve the attentions of a physician contribute nothing to the doctor's income during that period. Those who do have need of a doctor's care and who pay for the services rendered must together pay enough to make it profitable for the man to remain in their community—or else their community is soon without a doctor.

State Medicine.—One of the proposals for accomplishing the double purpose of providing every family with needed medical care and of equitably distributing the financial burden entailed is the substitution of state medicine for private practice. There is considerable reason for believing that in time the nation's health service will be as completely organized upon a public basis as is the school system of the present day.[1] If we are to assume that the social responsibility for serving the individual's health needs will be as completely recognized by the larger society as is the social responsibility for serving his educational needs, then it is natural to expect a similar institutional development, bringing to the patient adequate, free, and compulsory service, and to the physician, a reasonable amount of work so that he will have neither too little nor too much to do, along with recognition both financial and otherwise for efficient service.

Community Organization.—While certain present-day developments are apparently leading in the direction of state medicine, its complete adoption is not to be expected for many years. In the meantime, there is an urgent need for the setting up of social machinery of some kind in certain rural communities to achieve, in a measure and on a small scale, certain of the advantages that are hoped for by those who advocate the establishment of state medicine. One plan, which has been tried with satisfactory results in certain instances, is for a number of interested families in a given community, to pay an annual amount each, the total of which is sufficient to induce a competent physician to locate in their community. The amount of the guarantee most frequently provided is $3,000. Obviously this amount may be raised by 60 families paying $50 each, by 300 families paying $10 each, or by any other distribution that might be found practicable. The physician is thus assured a definite minimum income sufficiently high to afford a living; and the people of the community have the satisfaction of knowing that a doctor is readily

[1] HAIGH, G. W., "State Medicine: Boon or Bogy?" *North American Review*, Vol. 227 (2), pp. 193–200, February, 1929.

available. The guarantors are entitled to service to the amount that they have agreed to pay, paying additional amounts in case they receive additional service. Other families in the community make use of the physician in time of need, adding to the amount of his income. In the absence of a more extensive system of socialized medicine, some plan of the general nature of the one just outlined appears to be absolutely essential in the case of many communities unless they are to be severely handicapped in the matter of health protection.

The Hospital

It should be readily evident that rural communities are insufficiently supplied with hospital facilities. On the average the farm family in America must travel about eighteen miles to reach the nearest hospital, which means that a large proportion of farming people are considerably farther removed.[1] Many rural counties are entirely lacking in hospital facilities, which means that considerable portions of their populations are dangerously far removed from the sort of medical aid which can be afforded only through hospitalization.

Estimates vary as to the population base necessary for the proper support of the smallest hospital that can be expected to render adequate service to its community. It is probable that Wayne C. Nason's estimate of 10,000 is as good as any.[2] This would give 250 persons per bed in a hospital with forty beds; and a forty-bed unit is about as small as can be operated efficiently. Institutions much smaller than this are not able to do enough business to justify the expense incurred in carrying on a complete program of hospital service. It would seem that those who are interested should hope and work for nothing less than one 40-bed hospital for every rural county in America having a population of 10,000, with smaller emergency units in counties having a smaller population.

C. R. Hoffer has shown that of the eighty-three counties in Michigan, twenty-eight are entirely lacking in hospital service.[3] Nine of these counties have more than 10,000 population each, three of the nine having populations each of more than 30,000. In certain cases the counties in Michigan lacking hospitals are adjacent to other counties that are well supplied with hospital facilities. This is true of all of the more populous ones. The situation cannot be considered satisfactory, however, which leaves many farm and small-town families so far removed from adequate hospital facilities as is now the case in Michigan, where conditions are not

[1] Streeter, Carroll P., "The Rural Medical Situation," *Rural America*, January, 1930.

[2] Nason, Wayne C., "Rural Hospitals," *Farmers' Bulletin* 12185, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

[3] Hoffer, Charles R., "Public Health and Educational Services in Michigan," *Special Bulletin* 207, Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State College, January, 1931.

greatly dissimilar to those in several other states in the same part of the country and much superior to those existing generally in the South. For the whole state, there are 292 persons for each hospital bed, not considering the beds in state institutions and almshouses, which may not indicate a serious lack in numbers of accommodations. More serious, at any rate, is the fact that the existing hospital facilities are very unequally distributed throughout the state as regards numbers of population, many counties having none whatever and others having more than 1,000 persons for every hospital bed. Then, too, there is the further fact that about half of the 171 hospitals in the state are smaller than the forty-bed size which may be thought of as, in general, the smallest unit to be expected to furnish complete service.

There is no uniformity as regards the sponsorship of the rural hospitals in existence in America at the present time.[1] Some are maintained by counties, that is, in the twenty or so states in which counties have the legal right to tax themselves for the maintenance of public hospitals. Others are maintained by townships. There are also town, district, and community hospitals. Some hospitals available to the general public are privately maintained. It is quite probable that, in general, the county is the best unit for hospital support and that all of the states should make it possible for their counties to vote to establish such institutions. Cooperation for hospital maintenance, however, among several rural and small-town communities having an aggregate population of 10,000 or more has certain points in its favor. For one thing, political units such as counties and townships may not harmonize at all well with natural community groupings. If communities are able to cooperate without jealousy, a deeper feeling of loyalty may exist for the object of their cooperation than would always characterize the residents of a political unit for its institutions.

Much in the nature of education must usually take place preceding hospital-building programs in rural areas; and after a hospital has been erected, further education is needed to prepare farming people to make such use of it as is to be desired for the sake of health maintenance. Tradition is likely to incline country people to think of the hospital, if at all, only as a place of last resort. With one located in their own community, there is the possibility that under proper management the institution may come to mean much to them in the way of leadership toward higher health standards. In certain rural communities, a large proportion of the population has been led to accept the hospital as a health center in the same way that they accept the schoolhouse and the church as educational and religious centers of the community.

The Commonwealth Fund, among other agencies, has been significantly instrumental in the establishment of rural hospitals and in the

[1] NASON, *op. cit.*

development of well-informed attitudes toward them upon the part of country people. Before the formulation of its regular rural hospital program, the fund provided a fifty-bed hospital for Rutherford County, Tennessee, which was opened in 1927. Before the close of the year of 1927, five additional buildings in as many states had been awarded to rural communities according to a plan by which the fund pays two-thirds of the cost of the building and its equipment, the community paying the remainder of the first cost and agreeing to meet the deficit in operating expenses. The states in which these first five communities are situated are Virginia, Kentucky, Maine, Kansas, and Ohio. The Commonwealth program is by no means limited to the furnishing of financial aid in the erection and equipment of buildings. Physicians in the hospital areas are assisted by the fund through the provision of scholarships and annual institutes to secure up-to-date medical information; and in other ways influence is exerted to make of each hospital established a dynamic health center for its area.[1]

Public Health Service

The tendency is running strongly in the direction of a fairly complete organization of the whole country into county health units. At the beginning of 1930, there were 505 counties which had local health service organized under the direction of whole-time health officers and extended to every part of each county thus organized. The total of 505 is the result of a continuous increase during the preceding ten-year period. At the beginning of 1920, there were only 109 county organizations in existence. The gain during the ten-year period of 396 counties, or an average net gain of about 40 counties a year is significantly large; and in the opinion of national health experts this rate of increase will be accelerated during the next ten years.[2]

The federal government has been conducting a series of cooperative demonstration projects in rural sanitation. During the year closing June 30, 1930, such projects were maintained in 202 counties in 24 states, as shown in table on page 363.

It is without doubt true that this cooperative demonstration work carried on by the U. S. Public Health Service has been instrumental in the development of thoroughgoing county health service to the extent that has thus far been achieved. The demonstration phase of the work in the opinion of the surgeon-general has been satisfactorily completed, paving the way for a further extension of federal participation upon the cooperative basis.[3]

[1] Southmayd, Henry J., "Building Rural Hospitals," *Rural America*, June, 1928.

[2] U. S. Department of the Treasury, *Annual Report of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service of the United States*, p. 125, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1930.

[3] *Ibid.*

The type of county health department in general advocated is made up of four full-time persons. The four are a health officer, a sanitary inspector, a nurse, and an office clerk. If the county has a population of much more than 25,000, additional members may be needed on the staff. The annual budget demanded to maintain the minimum force of four amounts to approximately $10,000. In general, state boards of health and the U. S. Public Health Service bear a portion of the total expense, the remainder being borne by the counties concerned. In certain cases, other agencies, private and semiprivate, have also made contributions to aid with this work.

States	Counties
Alabama	8
Arkansas	21
California	3
Georgia	4
Idaho	2
Illinois	1
Iowa	1
Kansas	9
Kentucky	31
Louisiana	24 (parishes)
Massachusetts	1
Michigan	2
Mississippi	11
Missouri	14
Montana	3
New Mexico	7
North Carolina	4
Oklahoma	3
South Dakota	1
Tennessee	22
Texas	1
Virginia	13
Washington	1
West Virginia	15

The county public-health nurse is found more generally than is the type of county health department just described, or than is the full-time health officer. A nurse may obviously be employed at much less expense than is necessitated for the establishment of a complete department. Thus it is to be expected that counties in which public-health interest is developing will be at the stage in which they are ready to vote $2,500 or so for the employment of a nurse before they are ready to vote $5,000 or more to meet their share of the expense of setting up a complete health unit. In Michigan, while only 2 counties were numbered among the 202 in the whole country in which federal public-health projects were being carried on in 1930, 27 counties in the state were maintaining public-

health nursing service in 1928. One of the 27 counties had two nurses, and three had four each.[1]

The work of the county public-health nurse is largely educative in nature, assisting in building up better health standards through visiting in the homes, through the conducting of clinics and classes and conferences, and through work with the children in the schools. In addition to the benefits immediately derived through the work of the nurse, there is the further important probability that her influence will lead to the adoption of the more elaborate health program made possible only by the establishment of the complete county-health unit.

The counties containing a high proportion of rural people are still very largely without the services of public-health nurses. Fifty-six of Michigan's eighty-three counties were without them in 1928, and generally speaking these fifty-six counties contained much smaller percentages of urban people than was true of the counties with nurses.[2] In the field of public health, as well as elsewhere, farming people stand very definitely in need of every sort of aid which the cities are able to provide.

Mental Health

In the course of time it may come to be generally felt that the problems of mental health are fully as important as are those of physical health. When that time comes, public-health programs will include, as a matter of course, thoroughgoing consideration of the population groups conconcerned from the point of view of mental hygiene. Even now there are more mentally ill persons of the general population being given hospital treatment at any one time than is true of the physically ill—which obviously does not mean that more mental cases are hospitalized than cases of physical illness, for on the average the former remain in the hospital for much longer periods than do the latter.[3]

A large part of mental disease is preventable if proper measures are taken before the mental condition reaches the disease stage. The development of the proper preventive measures will, it is to be hoped, more and more come to be felt to be an important social responsibility.

Insanity.—Mental disorders to the extent of insanity are more frequent in urban than in rural districts. The latest statistics to be had show an average rate of 78.8 per 100,000 population admitted to hospitals for the insane from urban districts in 1922, while the corre-

[1] Hoffer, Charles R., "Public Health and Educational Services in Michigan," *Special Bulletin* 207, Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State College, January, 1931.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] McCartney, James L., "Mental Hygiene in a Public Health Program," *American Journal of Public Health*, September, 1930.

sponding rate for rural districts was 41.1.[1] Possibly a comparison of the rates does not indicate at all accurately the difference between rural and urban populations as regards the prevalence of insanity. It may be that a smaller proportion of the rural insane are confined in institutions than is the case with the urban. Because of greater family solidarity on farms than in the cities, probably a larger proportion of farming people affected by the milder types of insanity are cared for at home than is true of urban people who are affected to a like degree. It is generally agreed, however, that city life is more likely to lead to mental breakdown than is the more simple life of the rural community, thus that a higher incidence of insanity is to be expected in the city than on the farms and in the rural villages. Individuals who could have maintained their mental balance as members of family-farm units, following paths of routine largely marked out for them by farmer ancestors, may be unable to meet sanely the confusing demands made upon them by the complex life of modern urban existence.

Feeble-mindedness.—Feeble-mindedness or mental deficiency, as contrasted with insanity or mental disorder, is quite generally assumed to be more prevalent in rural than in urban regions. It is as true of the feeble-minded as of the insane that there are more of them, proportionately, admitted to institutions from the cities than from the country. The rate for 1922 per 100,000 of population was 8.5 from urban districts and only 4.4 from rural districts.[2] It seems probable, however, that a very much higher proportion of the rural feeble-minded than of the rural insane, as compared with conditions in the cities, are outside institutions. One bit of evidence tending to substantiate the belief that feeble-mindedness is at least as prevalent in the country as in the city consists in the fact that among the first admissions to institutions in 1922 from rural districts, imbeciles outnumbered morons, while in the admissions from urban districts morons very greatly outnumbered imbeciles.[3] There is no reason to suppose that the proportion of morons to imbeciles is any lower in the country than in the city. There are, upon the other hand, good reasons for believing that rural morons are much less likely to be sent to institutions than are urban persons of the same grade of mentality and that farm persons of lower grade mentality than morons are more likely to be cared for at home than is true of the same sort of persons in the cities.

There is no statistical proof to support a belief that feeble-mindedness is more characteristic of rural life than of urban. There are, however,

[1] U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Patients in Hospitals for Mental Diseases*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1923.

[2] U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Feeble-Minded and Epileptics in Institutions*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1923.

[3] *Ibid.*

certain fairly safe conjectures that may incline one to a tentative conclusion to that effect. In the first place, life is probably easier, in general, for a person of subnormal capacity in the relatively simple realm of existence of the family-farm group and the rural neighborhood than in the more complicated world of the city. If this be the case, those who hold the view that subnormal individuals migrate to the cities less than persons of normal mentality are probably right in their contention. There are a certain number of rural communities, a large proportion of which are in the older states, that seem to the observer to be composed largely of subnormal families—this condition supposedly being due in part to the continued movement out of the community over a considerable period of years of the more ambitious and capable individuals and in part to inbreeding among those who have remained behind.

In any case, the question whether the country has a higher or a lower rate of feeble-mindedness than the city is of relatively small practical importance. It is, upon the other hand, of very great importance that progressive attitudes be developed in rural communities, as well as in urban, regarding the proper treatment to be accorded to those who are mentally deficient to the end that this great social burden may be lightened.

Suicide.—Suicide is more of an urban phenomenon than a rural.[1] This would be expected because of the more complete individualization of life in the cities than on the farms. Life may be said to put more of a strain upon the individual in modern urban society than it does in the more primitive existence generally prevailing in agriculture. A heightened suicide rate is one of the results of this increased strain upon the individual in the cities. It does not necessarily follow, however, that, as one writer puts it, "We must conclude that the rural population shows in this respect, greater forcefulness, vitality, and love for, or satisfaction with, life."[2] A safer conclusion is simply that the rural population takes life's contingencies more largely for granted than does the urban. In terms of individual achievement, there is less disappointment through individual failure than in the cities. Instead of a positive love for, or satisfaction with, life, the rural attitude may be better described as a negative one of traditional unquestioning acceptance of the joys and sorrows of existence.

The farm individual generally lives very much as a member of his group, especially that of the family, and traditionally, also, of the neighborhood. The group sustains him in time of crisis, guarding him against the sense of individual defeat which might come to him were he

[1] U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Mortality Statistics*, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1927.

[2] Sorokin, Pitrim, and C. C. Zimmerman, *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, p. 175, Henry Holt & Company, New York, 1929.

less consciously a part of a group. Then, too, even in case he may feel that life is giving him more pain than joy, he is likely to feel the responsibility of living for the sake of his group which is depending upon him for what he may give. While the high degree of group solidarity in farm life tends to prevent suicide, it also tends to prevent distinctive achievement of a high order. Such group life makes very greatly for conformity. To commit suicide would be the height of nonconformity, but to strike out for oneself in some positive way to accomplish some original undertaking would also be nonconformity. The family-farm system tends to restrain both types.

The city is full of maladjusted and detached individuals. Some of the stronger and more fortunate of these are able to develop for themselves life associations which are sufficient to sustain them in the process of living to such an extent that they are able to make of themselves leaders of significance. Others who are less strong or more unfortunate in the type of contacts made fail just as spectacularly, and suicide is one of the evidences of such failure.

The unmarried furnish higher proportions of suicides than do those who are married. This would be expected. Marriage tends to stabilize the individual, thus making for a steadier sort of life. In certain cases, it undoubtedly deadens genius, preventing the individual from accomplishing what might be possible for him to accomplish outside marriage bonds. A surprisingly large number of leaders in various fields, not only women but also men, are unmarried. The greater prevalence of marriage in rural populations than in urban is one of the important reasons for the lower suicide rate in the former.

Women furnish a much lower proportion of suicides than do men, supposedly because they lead a more sheltered life than do the latter. Thinking less in terms of individual accomplishment, they are less likely to meet with what they consider defeat. They furnish fewer suicides for the same reason that they furnish a smaller proportion of distinguished successes. With the increased emancipation which they are now experiencing, it is to be expected that their suicide rate as well as their contribution to the ranks of the famous will be increased. At the present time, the disproportionate number of women in the population of the cities tends to keep the urban suicide rate lower than it would otherwise be.

CHAPTER XIX

ART AND RECREATION

When one considers the relationship of the farm and art, one thinks of two different ways in which these two concepts may be related. In the first place, there are the farm and its people as subjects of art portrayal, the same as any other phase of life. In the second place, there is the farm dweller with more or less capacity ready for development in the field of art appreciation and creation. It is the function of this discussion to contribute something toward the understanding of both of these matters.

The Farm as a Subject for Art

The purpose of art is to serve as an idealized representation of life. By the word *idealized* is meant selected in accordance with the nature of the artist. The artist selects those aspects of the phase of life which he is treating which seem to him to be most significant and stresses them in his painting or his novel, minimizing or omitting altogether other aspects which seem to him of minor significance. The good work of art treats a significant phase of life, one that is worth the attention of a possible public, and its portrayal of this phase of life is convincingly done. The great artist is such first of all, because he is able to see significant things in life which others have very largely failed to see; also because, in addition to vision, he has such a mastery of his technique that through it he is able to make the rest of the world, or some considerable portion of it, see those things too. The function of art, then, is to enrich the lives of those who come under its influence. The experience of living is through it made more vivid and full. Significant aspects of life from which one may be far removed in time or place are made to live as real elements of experience. Hidden significances in the daily round of existence are brought to light. Those who have had access to any of the finer creations of artistic genius and have been able to take in their influence with some degree of appreciation have thereby become more truly citizens of the world of nature and of men.

The supreme object of the artist should be to convey to us, through the medium of imaginative illusion, a great idea, impression, or emotion. Whether the art product be a story, a poem, a drama, a painting, a statue, a symphony,

or an opera, the idea at the heart of it is the vital thing, the soul of it, and the artist's mission is to express this idea as beautifully and impressively as possible.[1]

Nature has through all of the art-producing ages been one of the chief subjects for artistic portrayal. This will probably be the case until the end of time. The oceans, mountains, forests, gentle hills, and rippling brooks, the wild flowers and the birds enter impressively into the experience of a large share of sensitive people everywhere. Art representations of these things are therefore highly prized. In the dust and grime and noise and confusion of a great city, art portrayals of the works of nature may bring peace and refreshment to those who have sufficient leisure and an appreciative attitude of mind toward such things.

Just as truly as there are three separate concepts, country life, agriculture, and the family farm, there is a need for the separate artistic portrayal of each of the three, and there is real danger of confusing them, if not in the mind of the artist at any rate in that of the less discriminating public. It is more readily apparent that God made the country than that He made the family-farm system. The chief significance of country life is perhaps best seen in the rugged grandeur and the peaceful beauty of the works of nature; that of American agriculture, in great waving fields of grain and in choice herds of livestock; that of the family-farm in a life of restricted contacts and a narrow field of choice for the individual, with child labor and overheavy work of the wife. Any artistic portrayal of the family-farm which fails to present these and other primitive characteristics is poor art in that it has missed the very essence of the life it is pretending to represent.

Among recent literary artists who have most clearly seen and portrayed the distinctive thing in family-farm life may be mentioned Ruth Suckow in her simple narrative, *Country People;* Martha Ostenso in her novel, *Wild Geese*, and H. W. Freeman in a still more recent novel, *Joseph and His Brethren.* In each of these books is pictured most vividly the effect of the solidarity of family-farm life in its repressive influence upon the personalities of the individuals concerned.

There is on the part of some people who are busily engaged in giving farm life as attractive an appearance as they are able the demand that the artist should do his bit in this process of glorification. The artist is sometimes criticized for not giving to the world an attractive picture of the contemporary farm. A propagandic art is called for to add its weight of influence to such other propagandic forces as are operative elsewhere in the process of "artificially raising the prestige of the farm" as some writer has expressed it. It cannot be too vigorously asserted

[1] Shuman, Edwin L., *How To Judge a Book*, p. 211, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1910.

that propaganda cannot be good art and that the real artist, in common with the real scientist, is interested above everything else in finding and portraying the truth as it exists in the life before him. The artist may be trusted to discern new significances in farm life whenever they appear, just as he finds them in other fields of existence.

The Farmer as Artist

To the extent that the individual arranges the life about him in terms of order and beauty, giving it a human significance which it has lacked before, he is an artist. Individuals everywhere differ greatly in their inherent aptitude for producing art effects in the material with which they deal. They differ, also, in their cultural preparation for producing such effects. There is no reason for supposing people on farms to be greatly, if at all, deficient in artistic capacity as compared with those elsewhere. Rural artistic capacity, however, has sadly lacked in development, and this chiefly must be held accountable for the general lack of order and beauty in the farm home and its surroundings.

The farm pioneers in America thought of their houses as a shelter and protection and of their lives as a struggle with nature to provide a living and possibly material prosperity. Pioneer traditions in these respects are still strong. Farm-born individuals with marked artistic inclinations have largely had reason to feel themselves to be misfits in the farm scheme of life. Some of them have bowed to traditional pressure against such attitudes and have suppressed their artistic tendencies; others have joined the migration from the farms.

The country is obviously supplied with the natural elements out of which beautiful effects may be developed. Trees and shrubs and hills and streams and flowers are there with which to work. Space abounds to afford opportunity for planting more trees and flowers to supplement the work of nature. Farm dwellings may be located in such a way as to make effective use of natural backgrounds already existing; and where such natural backgrounds are lacking, trees and shrubs may be planted about the house in such a way as to produce the effect of natural beauty. Houses and other buildings may be built to harmonize well with their natural surroundings, instead of following plans that are more appropriate for the city street. Community action may transform bare and uninteresting country roads into beautiful drives and make of every school ground an attractive park. The natural possibilities are present in the country for all of these and other worthy developments in the direction of beautification. People are there, too, with the inherent capacity for an appreciation of the beautiful and with the need for the development of such appreciation if they are to live the fullest lives of which they are capable.

Hindrances in the Way of Rural Artistic Development

Certain important hindrances there are, however, in the way of such a development as has been suggested. In the first place, farmers are living in the country not mainly because of the beauty that is there or because of rural possibilities in the direction of beautification. Their thoughts do not turn at all naturally in such a direction. They are there to make a living and, if possible, something additional of a material sort. They will naturally stress the practical and ask of each proposal, "What will it mean in dollars and cents?" The country homes of urban business and professional men are likely to be places of beauty. These people are thinking of the country in terms of its beauty, or mainly they would not be there. The managements of summer resorts make large use of the possibilities of beautification for obvious business reasons. The farmer is quite sure to feel that developments in such a direction are for other types of people than himself.

In the second place, not only is the farmer's attitude toward life practical, inclining him to disregard those things which apparently do not further practical ends, but his degree of success has largely been won through a fight with nature. Beautiful trees have needed to be felled to make room for growing crops. Shrubs have needed to be grubbed out, and beautiful flowers have fallen within the farmer's classification of weeds, thus to be exterminated. It is not to be greatly wondered at that the farmer should hesitate to foster on one part of his premises the very types of growing things that he has struggled painfully to eliminate from other parts of his farm.

In the third place, strange as it may seem, there are good psychological reasons for some farmers actually to glory in the unsightly appearance of their homes. They take pleasure in accentuating the differences between themselves and urban people of the same class. If the latter are to strive for order and beauty, then *they* will as an expression of the defense mechanism range themselves on the side of disorder and ugliness.

Lack of supporting tradition in the direction of home and community beautification is an extremely important factor. Cases may be found in almost every community in which really beautiful places have been allowed to degenerate through a change in ownership. The nonconforming individual, after having spent the necessary thought and time and energy to secure certain artistic effects about the farmyard, making the place attractive, has in the natural course of events either died or moved away. The next occupant has allowed the hedge to become overgrown or has grubbed it out to make room for more potatoes and corn, and the place may have taken on a more unattractive appearance than some neighboring yards which nobody has ever tried to beautify.

It is possibly a mistake to expect to develop a sense for the beautiful in just one limited field. It may seem to such urban dwellers as have some degree of aesthetic appreciation that the farmer should be aided in some way to care to beautify his own physical surroundings, to build the right sort of house, and to keep it attractively painted, to group the other farm buildings in a way to satisfy the eye of the artist, and to make use of trees and other growing things to enhance the total art effect. There is reason to believe, however, that in most cases those individuals, either farmers or others, who appreciate beauty in architecture and landscaping are also sensitive to it in some of the various other forms in which it may appear. They are quite sure to love fine paintings and great music, and possibly poetry and the drama.

The principles of art are universal. "Rural art," as implying something fairly distinct, is a misnomer, just as is "urban art." The development of either a rural or an urban art sense, to be at all highly effective, must be based upon a foundation of art appreciation in general. True art can never isolate the individual from the general stream of life. It is quite sure to lift those who are highly sensitive to it up above the rural-urban barrier. Cities in close association with the skyscraper and other distinctively urban art manifestations are developing great natural parks characterized by those elements of beauty which, though rural in origin, are broadly human in their appeal. The modern artist, working with an almost exclusively urban public in mind, draws his material largely from rural sources and does not disdain to make full use of the work of the rural dwellers of by-gone days who composed the folk-songs and tales. The artist, whose home is probably in the city, and his public, made up at present almost entirely from those not engaged in agricultural pursuits, are drawing no line of distinction between the rural and the urban in their quest for the raw materials of art.

There is sufficient evidence to indicate that the European peasantry of past centuries, among whom occurred the spontaneous development of much in the way of art values, did not discriminate on principle between rural and urban sources of their material. Owing to the high degree of physical isolation of the times, their world of experience was largely limited to that of agriculture and rural living. Their art sense exercised itself mainly upon the familiar objects of their everyday life. The peasants were interested, too, as shown by the content of their tales and songs, in the great personages and important events of the towns, in kings and castles and wealthy merchants and in all that they imagined might be associated with them.

The American farming population of the present day differs in two essential respects in these regards from the old European peasantry. In the first place, the knowledge of urban life, owing to the agencies of modern communication, is much more complete and accurate than could

have been the case with the latter. In the second place, potential artists do not develop on the farm. They either leave the parental occupation and make their development elsewhere or fail pretty completely of such development.

Modern American life is highly specialized. The peasant while working at his menial task could sing at his work and compose new songs in his times of leisure with which possibly to delight his fellows. The American farmer, as noted by Taylor and others, is less and less prone even to whistle as he works in the field. Those in America who are peculiarly adept at whistling and singing and the writing of songs, as well as those who are recognized as especially skillful in the other fields of artistic expression, make their livelihood in the arts and in general for the sake of convenience live in the towns.

The American agricultural class is suffering an art impoverishment, partly owing to the rather general classification of art as an urban interest. Farm-born men and women who have entered upon an art career are thought of as having crossed some sort of boundary separating rural from urban and thus being lost to rural life. Farmers are deprived of the art contribution of a comparatively unspecialized peasant past and also very largely of the contributions of the specialized art group of the present time.

Need for Rural Training in Art Appreciation

Courses in art appreciation should be made much of in the rural schools. After the three R's, nothing would seem to be of more importance from the standpoint of the richness of life of farm-born children, whatever may be their life vocation. Such instruction should involve among other things the development of a loyalty to all of the great masters in every major field of art expression. Any hope for farm-home beautification, involving architecture and landscaping would seem to rest more securely upon the basis of art appreciation than upon any other. In addition to the benefit of having inculcated in those children who are to remain on farms a deeper sense for the beautiful than they could otherwise obtain, there is still another benefit to be derived from the successful teaching of such courses. Through their influence, farm-born potential artists of more than ordinary promise would be found and aided on their way to art careers. No other occupational group is making a more important contribution to the civilization of the time than is the group in art. Every section of the national population should be adequately represented in this group. The rural areas of America, according to statistical evidence presented in Chap. IV, have fallen further short of supplying their share of artists than of distinguished workers in any other field of the national life. The proper teaching of

courses in art appreciation in the rural schools should be expected to accomplish much in the way of correcting the deficiency.

Two obstacles immediately present themselves in the way of the success of such a program. In the first place, farming people traditionally regard such courses as "frills," whenever they are brought into the schools. In the second place, there is little hope of their being at all adequately presented in the single-room schools which are still typical in farming regions. There is every reason to suppose that these two difficulties may be gradually overcome, provided wise and tactful leadership concerns itself with making what progress it can toward a more complete dissemination of education in all the arts.

The Function of Recreation

All of the conscious activities of the individual may be classified into two categories, work and play, provided each be broadly conceived. These two categories are to be distinguished from one another in terms of mental attitudes experienced by the participant rather than by differences between the activities themselves. Work is activity pursued primarily as a means to an end, while play, upon the other hand, is an end in itself. Thus the activity that may be work for one man may be play or recreation for another or, possibly, for the same individual at a different time. Two men playing a game of golf together may be maintaining very different mental attitudes toward their common activity. One of them may be golfing primarily for the sake of his health, or for what he thinks it may mean to him in terms of business or social advantage, or for the low score which he hopes to make. For him the so-called "game" is work. If he derives the benefits hoped for from his activity, he will experience the satisfaction which comes to one from having succeeded at his task. Having done his work, he draws his pay in bettered health, enhanced business or social prestige, or a low score posted in the clubhouse. The other man may be drawing his pay as he goes along, experiencing a sense of exhilaration in the activity of the game itself. His primary satisfaction is derived from the game rather than from the achievement of some end for which the game has been but a means. It is without doubt well and good for a person to adopt the work attitude toward his game of golf. In case he does this, however, it is to be hoped that there is for him some activity to which he may turn in a truly recreational or play spirit.

The function of recreation is to contribute pleasure to the experience of living. The word denotes the process of recreating or refreshing. Viewing the matter literally, one must assume work to be the main business of life. According to this view, recreation or play is a subordinate activity of no great importance in itself, to be justified mainly on the grounds that it may help to bring about greater efficiency in work. If

the worker pause in his labors occasionally to divert himself with play, he may carry on his vocation with more zest and enthusiasm than would otherwise be possible, or, at least, if not with more positive satisfaction, at any rate with less dissatisfaction. All work and no play, it is said, makes Jack a dull boy. According to the literal way of looking at it, one plays that one may work more effectively—the pleasure of play being but a means to an end instead of an end in itself. The apologetic attitude assumed by many Americans in their times of recreation is evidence for the fact that they consider it a weakness of the flesh which impels them occasionally to drop the serious business of work to give themselves over to "having a good time."

It is not necessary that one should accept the distinction between work and play made in an earlier paragraph in order to agree that recreation is a very important element in a well-rounded life. Whether it be considered a means to an end or an end in itself may make little practical difference. In either case it is essential and, because it is essential, it seems reasonable to insist that those who are unable to play at least as whole-heartedly as they work have fallen far short of learning how to live.

Pleasure in Work

To the extent that the laborer finds exhilarating pleasure in his work, it has recreational value for him. The more completely life may be organized in such a way that all people may find a pleasant occupational adjustment, the better it assuredly is. Very few, however, even of those who are most favorably situated vocationally, are able completely to satisfy their impulses of self-expression in their work. Most workers find that their vocations fall far short of giving them a sense of completeness. Nearly every occupational task has its disagreeable aspects for the one who is performing it; and even work that is extremely enjoyable to the worker is likely at times to become monotonous and deadening unless there be opportunity to escape from it temporarily into some other form of stimulating activity.

Meager Recreational Development among Farmers

The criticism is often made by foreign observers that Americans, in general, do not give evidence of possessing an appreciation of the value of play. This criticism applies more especially to farmers than to any other element in our population. Some of the reasons why this is true are easy to understand. In the first place, Puritan traditions with their emphasis upon the work virtues are more strongly entrenched in our country population than in that of the cities. Industry, thrift, self-restraint, and the like are overstressed among farmers, in part, undoubtedly, because of their relatively slight contact with some of the more recently developing recreation movements having their origins in the

cities. Foreign influences of various types have naturally affected our cities more strongly than the rural districts, and they have accomplished something there in the direction of aiding towards a relaxation of early American austerity. These influences have had relatively little effect on the farming people, whose attitude remains through tradition predominantly a practical one. Conservatism due to isolation and family-farm solidarity is influential here as it is in all other aspects of the farmer's life.

In addition to the forces of tradition, there are other factors springing immediately from the nature of the farmer's occupation and his manner of life which are instrumental in forming his attitudes toward recreation. Foremost among these factors must be mentioned the constant pressure of work to be done. Most men who are engaged in other occupations have their definite hours of labor with equally definite periods when they are not working at their regular vocations. They have a certain amount of spare time, of leisure, which they may devote to recreational pursuits of one sort or another. The typical farmer is so situated that he is likely to feel that any time which he or the other members of the family may use in recreational ways is stolen from the working day. Thus such playing as he does he is apt to do with a somewhat guilty conscience.

Other factors which are important deterrents to the development of a joyous play atmosphere in the farm home are the following: the close physical relationship of the home to the industry which tends to keep the thought of work always in the farmer's mind, thus aiding to strengthen the idea that there is always work to be done; the coming of rush periods in farm work to interrupt recreation programs which may have been begun during times when work was less pressing; insufficient numbers of easily accessible play companions for the children to make possible group play of those of like age and size; the lack of proper play experience in childhood tending to incapacitate adults for the development of proper recreational attitudes.

Results of Recreational Insufficiency

One of the more obvious results of the lack of a sufficient amount of the right kind of play in childhood is poor health. Farmers, both young and old, in general, do not lack physical exercise. Many of them, however, do lack the all-round physical development essential for the best of health. This complete development of the body can be best brought about through athletic sports, carried on over a considerable period of time and involving the vigorous application of the individual to the matter of his proper physical development. Competitive games serve best to call forth the individual's enthusiastic participation. The farmer is likely to give disproportionate value to the mere matter of

physical strength needed for performing certain routine processes of farm labor, and he may quite correctly feel that sufficient strength may be acquired through performing these processes themselves rather than through any form of play. With his emphasis upon what seems to him to be the practical, he is apt to give scant attention to other aspects of physical health which do not develop naturally in child labor upon the farm, such as a symmetrically developed body, characterized by grace and sprightliness. He thinks of beauty and of good looks, in general, as a merely superficial adornment rather than as it relates to the person's health. The traditional failure of farming people to appreciate the various evidences of bounding good health and of the relation of athletic sports and of childhood play to physical well-being is in part responsible for general health deficiency on the farms.[1]

Mental dullness is often due to an insufficient participation in games and other forms of recreational activity. The keenly alert mind capable of giving a good account of itself in the making of quick decisions in this modern complex world is as worthy of cultivation as is the well-developed and sensitively responsive body. A proper sort of play experience is as useful in the development of the one as of the other. Any number of people on farms with minds of supposedly fine inherent quality are afflicted with very real mental awkwardness because of too little of the right sort of exercise, both mental and physical, in their younger days.

The often-remarked inability of farmers to cooperate efficiently is closely related to their lack of training in group play. Teamwork in adult life so essential for successful achievement of every worthy sort is best prepared for by teamwork in play by children. The individual of any age who can give himself whole-heartedly in play for the sake of his team is developing in the sport valuable social attitudes which will be of use to him in the various relationships of the work-a-day world. The farmer boy who finds the process of social adjustment difficult upon his arrival in the city owes much of his difficulty to his lack of social experience in group play.

In the minds of many thinkers, the result of recreational insufficiency most to be deplored is the loss of happiness which the individual suffers. If life is primarily an experience to be positively enjoyed rather than one to be patiently borne, then those who have been able from childhood on into adult years to experience frequent moments of light-hearted joyous fun are highly favored persons. It may be that the sanest way of looking at the matter is to think of good health, mental alertness, a cooperative spirit, and possibly other values to be derived from play, as merely desirable by-products of recreational activity whose main function it is to bring more happiness into life.

[1] Curtis, Henry S., "Physical Education in the Rural School," *Rural America*, February, 1927.

Recreational Activities of Farming People

Farming people have never been entirely lacking in recreational activities. Pioneer American farmers had their log rollings, their spelling bees, their singing schools, their sleighing parties, and the like, representative of a richer communal life than characterizes American agriculture at the present time. Even the more completely isolated farm family of today spends some time at play, or at least in other than what they would classify as work activities.

Certain studies covering the matter of rural recreation have been made. One such survey was made by C. E. Lively of Ohio State University.[1] In Paulding, one of the two counties studied by Professor Lively, it was found that the most widespread recreational activities participated in by the male sex, including all of those eleven years of age and over, were in order of popularity the following: Sunday visiting, reading, fairs, picnics, institutes, horseshoe (game), fishing, hunting, concerts, reunions, and church sociables. Those of the female sex participated in the same activities with some slight difference in order of popularity, excepting that the latter substituted fancy work, home parties, and lectures, for the horseshoe (game), fishing and hunting enjoyed by the males. In Gallia County, reading, institutes, concerts, and reunions were less frequently mentioned than by the residents of Paulding, their places in the lists of activities being taken by ice cream sociables, feeds, and evening visiting. Gallia is a less prosperous county than Paulding, and Prof. A. W. Hayes has suggested that its backward condition may possibly be in part accounted for by the fact that fewer of its residents are interested in reading.[2]

In considering the above mentioned leisure-time activities of farming people from the standpoint of their true recreational values, one is bound to be impressed by their inadequacy. While every activity mentioned would seem to be valuable, it is not probable that the farm individual is likely to receive from them what he should be getting in the way of refreshing stimulation and training in teamwork. In the first place, certain of the activities would seem to have more occupational than recreational significance. This is the case with attendance upon farm institutes and with the reading of bulletins and agricultural journals. Then, too, certain activities, such as reading, hunting, and fishing, may be carried on by one person alone, in which case the participating individual is not getting from them what he needs in the way of social stimulation. Much of the farmer's work is done in isolation. In order

[1] Lively, C. E., "Rural Recreation in Two Ohio Counties," *Bulletin* 1, Graduate Series, Ohio State University, 1927.

[2] Hayes, Augustus W., *Rural Sociology*, p. 503, Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1929.

that his life may be well-balanced socially, much of his spare-time activity should be carried on with other people. The group activities mentioned, such as picnics and sociables and feeds, offer possibilities in the direction of mental stimulation through social contacts. To a very large extent, however, the individuals participating in diversions of such a nature, are not deriving all of the benefits to be hoped for from group recreational activity. Because of the looseness of organization generally characterizing such activities, allowing the participants to take part in a most passive way, to say nothing of the infrequency and irregularity usually characterizing the times of meeting, little positive value is to be derived from them by most persons concerned. The only game played by any large number of men in the two counties studied was that of horseshoes. About half of the men cooperating in the survey played this game more or less frequently. While this is without doubt a good game, there should be others as well if the farmer's recreational life is to be at all well rounded. The women of the two counties did not play horseshoes or any other game to any significant extent.

Rural Recreational Needs

The recreational needs of farmers and other rural people are not greatly unlike those of an urban population. It stands to reason, however, that persons either rural or urban whose daily work is largely of a heavy physical nature do not demand the same type of physical recreation as is required by those whose occupations are sedentary in character. Most manual laborers, though, could profitably spend some time with physical games that call for a freer use of the entire body than is demanded by their occupations. Games, also, which stress precision and rhythmic movement are of value to farmers. For the mental and social well-being of farming people there is need for games and other recreational activities involving cooperative action and for those making demands upon the higher nerve centers. Mental as well as physical exhilaration of the participants should be kept in mind in the planning of recreational programs. A report of a Committee on Recreation of the American Country Life Association written by E. C. Lindeman suggests group games, organized athletics, folk dancing, and community singing as embodying the characteristics which are essential in any scheme designed to meet rural needs.[1]

Institutional Aids to Recreational Development

The School.—It is the school more than any other institution that must aid in the matter of rural recreation. Its function is education. Rural children and young people need to be taught how to live as adults includ-

[1] Lindeman, E. C., "Report of Committee on Recreation," *Rural Health*, pp. 118–133, American Country Life Association, Chicago, 1919.

ing how to provide themselves with the advantages to be secured through recreational activities. If the school does its work well, it will give its pupils a well-balanced recreational program intended to serve adequately their present needs; it will also prepare them at the same time for demanding the best things in the way of recreation as adults.

One of the chief counts against the small one-room school is that it does not serve at all adequately the recreational aspects of life. The farmers of the present were not properly prepared for life in its recreational phases by the schools which they attended; and to the extent that those same schools prevail at the present time, the next generation of farmers will be little better situated than their parents. Consolidated schools are likely to provide well for recreation. They have sufficient numbers of pupils with which to deal to justify the necessary expense for essential equipment and for the salaries of properly qualified directors of recreation. Such schools serve in a recreational way not only the pupils who are enrolled but often the entire community.

Clubs.—In the cities, the recreational life of young people is cared for in part by various organizations intended primarily for that purpose. Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and other organizations of like nature supplement the activities of the school and of the city in the field of recreation for children. For various reasons, the young people on farms, and in rural communities generally, have been less well provided with the benefits of organized recreation than have those in the cities. Recently, however, organizations of the same general nature as those available to city children have been developing to an increasing extent in small towns. The agricultural clubs to which many farm boys and girls belong place their main emphasis upon work rather than play. There is the possibility of enriching the programs of such organizations in the direction of recreational development.

The Community.—The ideal situation is one in which the community as such is organized to further the recreational interests of the whole group. Any thoroughgoing community organization must necessarily take into account the recreational needs of its members as well as whatever economic, religious, educational, health, and other needs there may be. The recreational needs of the rural community will be better cared for if a competent superintendent of recreation be in charge than if there be a lack of centralized expert direction.

Wayne C. Nason reports certain advances in rural organization for recreation.[1] As results of such organization, there is, for example, a certain development of rural community days, pageants, athletic badge contests, and athletic leagues. In North Dakota and New York, the little country theater is made much of. In Iowa in 1925, 149 township

[1] Nason, Wayne C., "Recreation for the Farming Population," *Yearbook*, pp. 625–626, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1926, Washington, D. C.

farm-bureau organizations produced plays under centralized leadership. Certain new legislation in Pennsylvania makes it possible for counties and townships in that state to have boards of recreation. Chester County has a superintendent of recreation whose chief function is the training of rural recreation leaders. "Some of the results are development of athletics, neighborhood social evenings, new community halls, school recreation at fairs, promotion of Christmas programs, and establishment of recreation clubs." Butte County, California, also has a county recreation director who works largely through the farm-bureau organizations to advance recreational development in his county. In fact, every farm-bureau unit in the state of California has a committee whose function it is to plan recreational events. From various other states including Illinois, Utah, Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota come reports of recreational ventures sponsored by farm organizations. Baseball leagues and musical organizations are among the more frequently mentioned.

A. H. Rapking of the West Virginia Agricultural Extension Service writes of a League for Recreation and Art which he is instrumental in maintaining in his state.[1] In this league, each community is a unit with two representatives on a board of directors. The board of directors elects an executive committee which is in charge of the program of events. There are county round-ups from which the winners go to meet and compete in a regional round-up or tournament. In addition to the advantages derived by individuals participating in any of the activities, there has been developed, according to Mr. Rapking, a considerable increase in community, county, and regional consciousness. Among the more formal recreational activities stimulated by the organization of this league are mentioned baseball, volley ball, horseshoe pitching, tennis, croquet, musical programs, and the staging of one-act plays. In addition to events such as these—and centering in them—there is much of a wholesomely informal getting-together of families in each community, many of which before the formation of the league had very little social contact with other families.

The lives of people are not made up of independent segments. They are characterized instead by an interrelatedness of parts. Recreational benefits to the individuals of the community are more than likely to lead to advantages in other phases of the community life, including even the economic.

[1] Rapking, A. H., "A League for Recreation and Art," *Rural America*, September, 1930.

CHAPTER XX

RELATIONS BETWEEN AGRICULTURAL AND NON-AGRICULTURAL POPULATIONS

The above chapter heading is intended to suggest with greater definiteness what is usually in the minds of those who refer to the relation between country and town, or to that between rural and urban populations. The distinction to be drawn is actually between agriculturalists (more specifically, family-farm people) and others, rather than between rural and urban populations. At the present time so many residents of the rural communities are not agricultural in occupation or in point of view that the distinction seems to be well worth making.

Ideally, the relationship between farmers and others would obviously be one of friendly cooperation. All people wherever they are located and whatever may be their special task in the national and international scheme of life should bear to one another feelings of kind regard. Attitudes contrary to those of mutual respect and generous appreciation are bound to result in some sort of wasteful and destructive expression of human energy. Life implies conflict, but it is possible for life's conflicts to be so organized that they actually contribute to a sense of oneness between opposing groups instead of being wastefully divisive in their effect. Bitterly contested athletic events between individuals or teams, all of the members of which are inspired by the spirit of wholesome sportsmanship, well illustrate the possibility of conflict subordinated to large cooperative ends. Life would be a far finer thing if all of its conflicts were carried out in as sportsmanlike a spirit as athletic contests at their best.

Certain Factors Making for Hostility between Farmers and Others

Such attitudes of hostility as exist in twentieth century America between farmers and others have their bases in part in centuries-old tradition. The following quotation gives us a bit of literary background for the consideration of present-day differences.

> In every language of Western civilization the term for "farmer" has sooner or later come to have the meaning of an illiterate, superstitious, dependent, and uncouth person.
>
> The German word for peasant, "Bauer," led to the appellation, "boor."
>
> The Latin "Paganus," a countryman, came to signify the worst that we think of when we say "pagan."

By contrast, all words pertaining to the city, such as "citizens," "civility," "urbanity," and even the comprehensive word "civilization" itself have implicit in them a comparison with the assumed characteristics of the country and the countryman.

Even the word "country" signifies that which is over against (counter) the city.

In our very speech is embodied a constant positive reference to the city and a constant negative suggestion of the country.[1]

Present-day attitudes are far from being entirely a matter of tradition as embodied in language. The same social factors that were accountable for the direction taken in the evolution of certain words, indicated in the above quotation, are operative still. The city, being more articulate than the country, occupies the place of social dominance. The groups of urban dwellers who give character to the cities, and thus to America, are relatively small groups of especially favored individuals. It is the urban or non-agricultural portion of America which holds the attention of foreign observers. The urban individuals whom these observers see are not the laborers who make up the base of the city pyramid, but rather the men who head the mammoth organizations of industry and finance. It is these skillful organizers of urban affairs who represent America to the world. All those individuals who serve in any capacity in the various phases of the organized life of the cities are given a certain standing through this fact. Even though individually the lives of many are lacking in much that is needful for a completely satisfying existence, they are all parts of the powerful system of American urban life and tend to realize a certain degree of self-respect through that relationship. Messenger boys, bell hops, truck drivers, stenographers—all these are of the city as truly as are the presidents and general managers of the great concerns with which the former are associated. The city symbolizes power, and all of those who may think of themselves as identified with the city are sharers in the esteem that goes with power. However lacking the urban individual may be personally, it is psychologically easy to think of him as a partaker in those attributes which characterize the leaders and organizers of city life. In contrast to the non-agricultural affairs of America, the agricultural are unorganized and therefore lacking in power; and the farmers as a class lack the social esteem that is called forth by power resulting from organization.

The impartial observer—for example, a European traveler who is contrasting urban and rural life in America—is quite sure to set against one another, each as representative of his part of the national life, the wealthy, cultured, urbane man of prominence in the city and the sort of farmer who best typifies agriculture's lack of organization and power, an uneducated, uncouth, superstitious, well-nigh poverty-striken indi-

[1] Bailey, W. L., "The Word 'Farmer,'" *Rural America*, January, 1925.

vidual. Such a contrast does injustice to great numbers of people both of the farms and the cities, yet it is the sort that is bound to be made, at least by the superficial observer. The prestige of urban inferiors is enhanced by their association with organization and power; that of superior farmers is reduced by their association with disorganization and weakness.

Farming people who think of these things, as increasing numbers of them must, owing to rapidly improving facilities for communication, are likely to be impressed by the injustice of the situation. The farmer's occupation is as important as any, the individual farmer may be working at this occupation in a most intelligent way, he may be personally as competent as most men of the cities; yet in spite of all that he may be and may do, he is pretty largely ignored in the matter of social rewards. The city because of its organized power dominates agriculture in the economic life of the nation.

The farmer is more likely to be conscious of domination in the economic field than elsewhere. The city's power through organization, however, serves to give precedence to every desirable thing in its life that may be thought of as distinctively urban. The nation is made up of two very separate worlds, and the farmer is conscious that the world of which he is a member is in general considered to be inferior in most significant ways to that of the city. It is thus not to be wondered at if the realization that he is discriminated against, whether or not the farmer blames the lack of justice upon the ill will of city people, leads to attitudes upon his part that are akin to those of bitterness. The conditions are right for the maintenance of a barrier of mistrust and suspicion separating farmers from others, thus making impossible such cooperative relations as would characterize an ideal society.

In addition to the vaguely impersonal sources of such sense of injustice as the farmer may experience, there is much in the nature of the personal contacts that many farmers have with others which contributes to the same unsatisfactory end. The business relations of the typical small farmer with people of the village, as truly as with those of the city, may be carried on in such a way as to give the farmer feelings of resentment and possibly of inferiority. When the farmer deals with the village business man, the transaction is usually carried on in the village. The farmer *goes to* the stores and banks and mills of the town and is apt to feel that the dealing is one-sided. Not usually a business man himself, he has to transact a certain amount of business with business men. Many small-town bankers and other personages, whose operations are entirely legitimate, have the reputation among the farmers of the vicinity of being "sharpers." In some cases, too, small-town business men have unscrupulously taken advantage of the farmer's ignorance and lack of skill in business matters to defraud the latter. There have been enough

cases in which villagers have outwitted farmers to account for a great deal of the suspicion with which farmers regard people of the villages and towns.

Another important factor in the experiences of many farmers deserves more consideration than has thus far been given it. It consists in the back-door contacts which these farmers have with town residents. Many farmers dispose of a part of their produce by "peddling" it from door to door in town. The men and women from the farms who carry potatoes and fruit and butter and eggs into the kitchen through the back or side door of the residences of town people are not unaffected psychologically by the process. Certain of these farm people are very frankly lower-class people. They are not in the least embarrassed by being classified, in the minds of those to whom they sell, in the same category as such other people as have only back-door dealings with those who live in the fine houses of the towns. Certain others sell at retail only to a few of their town friends, some of whom were former farm neighbors. With such people their dealings would not be exclusively of the back-door type. There are many, however, to whom the back-door relationship with urban dwellers is exceedingly painful. These farmers and their wives wish to think of themselves as middle-class people. They may be as "well fixed" economically as most of those to whom they sell. They may, also, be as well educated and have as high cultural aspirations. In order to secure the best prices obtainable for what they have to sell, however, they may feel obliged to resort to the door-to-door peddling process. The farmer becomes "the man with the potatoes," his wife is "the woman with the eggs," just as one would refer to the man who delivers the ice or the coal and the woman who brings home the laundry. It is obviously well-nigh out of the question for those farmers who have become accustomed to thinking of their relationships with town people in back-door terms ever to feel entirely at their ease in the matter of "front-door" relations. Individual temperaments will determine the attitudes that are developed in individual cases. Some individuals are led to adjust themselves quite comfortably to a lower-class point of view. Others are perpetually living in a state of painful maladjustment, with feelings of resentment against the people of the towns, possibly of a highly personal sort, possibly vaguely impersonal. In any case, such relations make difficult a finely cooperative relationship between farmers and others.

The roadside markets which increasing numbers of farmers are setting up on their front lawns are not without their social implications. The farmer who spends his Sunday afternoons with his eye upon the road awaiting those who may buy his fruit, vegetables, or poultry cannot escape classification somewhere in the observer's mind under the general heading of "salesman." It may or may not be that he is grouped with

the keepers of city fruit stands. At any rate, there is apparently nothing in the relationship thus established between those who sell and those who buy to enhance the social prestige of the farmer, either in his own mind or in that of the observer. If the motoring public, the potential patronizers of roadside markets, existed for the farmer only as people with whom to have small-scale business transactions—in other words, if farmers were a socially independent group—then there would be little social significance in the relationships established. If it were generally admitted by all concerned that farmers were a lower-class element of the general population, then we should have a situation of definite social adjustment. Systems of cooperation between farmers and others might then be developed with relative ease upon the basis of the definite social relationship maintained. The front-lawn business contacts in the country, however, are not greatly different from the back-door business contacts in town as related to the possibility of developing the most wholesome social relations between farmers and others. It seems obvious that the farmer's self-respect would be safer in contacts with the former type rather than in those of the latter, for in the former the purchaser is coming to him in his own place of business. Whether the relations thus established, however, furnish a better basis for cooperative activity between supposed social equals may well be doubted.

There is no reason why the sale of farm products should not be conducted on as high a plane of dignity as that of any other sort of articles that are sold. The typical small farmer, however, who has a small amount of unstandardized product to sell and who is no expert in sales methods, occupies a most disadvantageous social position in the world of business, in addition to his disadvantageous economic position. He is in no position to do himself justice as an individual in a modern world of organization, standardization, and highly trained specialized personnel. The realization that he is not getting the social credit to which he feels himself, on the basis of his personal attributes, to be entitled, while others whom he has reason to consider are no "better" than himself are being carried along on a relatively high level of social prestige merely because they fit well in the modern scheme, is bound to contribute to an attitude of mind unfavorable to the finer sorts of cooperation.

The farmer's direct personal contact with non-farmers is mainly with residents of the villages and small towns. For the most part, the populations of large cities and farming groups live completely out of touch with each other. The small towns occupy an intermediate position between large cities and open country. Many of them depend for their economic existence upon the people of the surrounding farms; all of them maintain more or less close relations with certain of the economic institutions of the cities. From the point of view of a resident of the large city, it probably is true as Taylor remarks, that small town and

farm are thought of as "a unit."[1] For him, the most important population line of division occurs between small town and large city rather than between farm and small town. The opposite, however, is likely to be the case from the standpoint of the farmer. For the same reason that everything outside the great cities looks like country to the resident of the large city, everything that is not open country looks like city to many farmers. The residents of small towns, in the main, agree with the farmers in their way of looking at the matter. Small-town business and professional men and industrial laborers have more in common with those of similar occupations in the large cities than they have with the people of the farms.

Relations between Small Towns and Cities

While there are important reasons for attempting to develop oneness of spirit between small-town residents and farmers, a unified point of view does not come naturally. The natural thing is for small-town leaders to identify themselves socially with the cities and largely to ignore the people of the surrounding farms. If they are ambitious for personal advancement, their faces turn cityward. They have good reason for studying the cities and striving to form connections with the "right people" in them. They must get along on some terms with the people of the farms as long as they live in such close physical proximity to them, and they may feel it to be worth their effort to strive to get along pleasantly—in fact, their immediate economic success may depend upon the maintaining of pleasant relations with farm people. Wholehearted fraternization, however, is impossible unless there be a substantial basis for it in common interests, and these are all too often lacking.

Not all of the more efficient teachers, ministers, doctors, lawyers, and business men of the small towns are "promoted" to the cities, but many of them are. In any case, their efficiency is in part dependent upon their familiarity with large-city conditions and methods as related to their occupations. Social affiliations with those in the larger centers of population are of professional value to these people, and sameness of occupation furnishes a natural basis for congeniality of social relations.

Increasing numbers of small towns are drawn closely to some city center through the location of branch industrial plants in them. The tendency at present in urban industry is one of decentralization. Certain economic advantages are realized through the establishment of scattered units in small places. In the words of Prof. William L. Bailey, "They (the suburbs) are in the very van of American city life."[2] They are

[1] Taylor, Carl C., *Rural Sociology*, p. 429, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1926.

[2] Bailey, W. L., "The Modern City and Country Life," *Rural America*, April 1926.

actually extensions of the cities over a wide geographical area; and improved methods of transportation and communication are enlarging the areas that each city and its suburbs include. In the small suburban towns are located not only branches of urban industrial concerns but the residences of great numbers of people who formerly lived in the large-city center and who are still very real members of large-city society, notwithstanding the fact that they are living, at least temporarily, in the small places. In those small towns affected by the suburbanizing influence of the cities, the "city" atmosphere is obviously heightened, affording probability of a heightening of the feeling of social difference between town dwellers and farmers. In such towns the business and professional men are less dependent economically upon farmer patronage than is the case with those established in purely agricultural towns and there is a strengthening of the relationships, social as well as economic, between such a town and the large city of which it is a satellite.

Relations between Small Towns and the Farm Population

Three different levels of relationship between small towns and farmers may easily be distinguished. In each case, the attitudes of small-town leaders apparently determine the nature of the relationship experienced. As has been explained above, the situation is one fraught with peculiar difficulty. Ideally harmonious relations do not develop naturally of themselves. The small town stands in need of economic support furnished by the farmers in the vicinity. In many cases, the town is absolutely dependent in an economic way upon the farms; in the remainder, the farmer's trade, while not indispensable, is of decided value. The socially ambitious persons of the town are not anxious for close social contacts with farming people. From the standpoint of the farmers, the situation is reversed. They may get along in an economic way without visiting the near-by towns; they may easily travel a few more miles to some other town; and they may frequently change their business center. They may deal directly with some large city or depend almost entirely upon mail-order business relations. Socially, however, they are restricted to contacts with those of their own occupation unless they are led to develop congenial social relations with people of other occupations who live in some near-by town. In other words, farmers stand in social need of the town if they are to achieve a vital relationship with the world of men and affairs existing outside of their own occupation.

1. The lowest level of relationship between people of the small towns and farms is one of positive friction. A farmer, owing to his traditions and his manner of life, is prone to be suspicious of the townsman. He is apt to underestimate the amount of effort and skill which the town business and professional men are devoting to their work. "City loafer" is an expression that is not at all infrequently used by farmers to

characterize men in a "white-collared" occupation who are actually expending as much energy at their tasks as are the farmers themselves. The farmer is apt, also, to overestimate the profits which the people of the towns derive through their business dealings with those from the farms. Unaccustomed to handling much money himself, the farmer is likely to have little realization of what a small proportion of the townsman's income is actually profit.

If the leaders of thought in the town do not understand the farmer any better than he understands them, friction is quite sure to result. If the townsman assumes an attitude of ridicule towards the farmer because of the latter's different ways of thinking and of living, it is good evidence of a failure to understand. The farmer is the sort of man he is because of the working of the same social laws that have given the townsman his distinctive nature. Opposition and ridicule upon the part of the townsman are not the best means of developing favorable economic relationships between town and farm.

In certain towns, the merchants and others apparently feel that they have some sort of vested rights to the trade of the surrounding countryside. The spokesmen of the business groups of such towns are likely to assume an attitude of open hostility towards mail-order houses and chain stores and to put every sort of obstacle in the path of those farmers who are attempting to organize cooperative ventures. In certain cases, town merchants have expressed resentment at the activities of county agricultural agents because of the aid the latter are giving to farmers in their business relations. The traditional noncooperative attitude of farmers is heightened by such treatment in the towns, which leads to the development of thoroughly unsatisfactory conditions. Both towns and farms stand to lose economically when their mutual relations are unpleasant, and the losses are certain to extend into various other phases of life than the economic. In certain cases, for example, farmers have refused to vote for a consolidated school, chiefly because they felt that it would be of benefit to the village. Dr. Brunner, according to a statement in *Rural America* by Perry P. Denune, reports a village in which the men of a certain church refused to furnish automobile transportation for farm children in order that they might attend Sunday school because of the fact that the children's parents were patrons of mail-order houses.[1] Whatever may be said of the ethics of mail-order buying, such an attitude displayed by village merchants would hardly be expected to decrease the practice.

To just what extent town-country friction of the sort illustrated above exists, there is no way of knowing. It has been estimated that about one town of every six in the country as a whole is at outs with the

[1] Denune, Perry P., "Opposition between Town and Country," *Rural America*, April, 1928.

people of the farms. Whether there is increasing or decreasing friction between farm and village dwellers one cannot say with certainty. Certain general factors making both for and against more harmonious relations can be detected, but one may only conjecture which set of factors is at present the more influential. Upon the side of increasing friction is the fact that farmers are coming to demand more of life than they have heretofore demanded, therefore to demand more of the towns that would serve them. They demand a greater variety of goods to choose from than they did in the past, and they are increasingly in a position to go more miles to make their purchases than was formerly the case. If the farmers surrounding a given town were to abandon it completely, its end would come quickly, and the question of the quality of the relations existing between it and the farmers would no longer exist. In general, however, the abandonment is not at all complete, the farmers continuing to go to the near-by villages for certain services. The upsetting of the old relations of more complete dependence of the farmers upon a certain town is a fruitful source of mutual suspicion which may lead to bitterness.

The automobile must be given a large share of the credit, or the blame, for the unsettling process. It has very greatly increased the mobility of the farmer. Whatever it may mean as regards his inner nature, there can be no question that it has made him much more independent in the field of external contacts. It has given him greatly increased choice as to where he shall go to do his buying and where he shall secure his amusements and recreation. Difficulties, too, have risen over the parking of the farmers' cars in town. In certain towns, resentment has been occasioned because of the parking of farmers' cars in resident sections. The farmers, in turn, complain because the business men do not provide adequate parking space. Sometimes, too, there is friction caused over the enforcement of laws relating to speeding.

Upon the side of decreased friction is the tendency toward the development of greater insight upon the part of townsmen. There is especially in certain sections extremely keen competition among towns for the business patronage of farming people. Those who win in the competition are likely to do so through their tactful development of friendly relations with people from the farms. The struggle for existence and for increased success among those who would have farmers for their customers is bound to make for increased tactfulness upon the part of those town people who have it in them to be tactful and for the elimination of the others from the field of business competition.

2. The second level of relationship between small-town people and farmers is one marked by generally cordial business dealings. On this level, the townspeople regard the farmers as customers whose good will is worth securing and maintaining. They neither, upon the one hand,

take for granted farmer economic dependence upon their particular town, nor, upon the other hand, do they regard the farmers in general as the social equals of townsmen. The relationships in the main are external ones, but such as they are they are considered to be mutually profitable.

Such a level of relationship can in general be maintained only through the conscious planning of the business leaders of the town. Sometimes the programs include merely making the town a pleasant and profitable place for the farmers to come to carry on business and recreational affairs, involving skillful advertising, liberal credit facilities, free parking space, the provision of suitable rest rooms, free entertainment in the nature of band concerts, and the like. Sometimes the programs are much more comprehensive and possibly in the long run more profitable for everyone concerned.

L. J. Taber, master of the National Grange, reports as follows:

> We could give many examples where Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis, Rotary, and other organizations have, by cooperation with the Grange, Farm Bureau, or other agency, rendered outstanding service in the development or carrying out of some community project. For example, we know of a Chamber of Commerce in a thriving city that caught the vision of developing the dairy industry in its territory. Through cooperation with local Granges, calf clubs were organized, bull associations were developed, and later the Chamber of Commerce and banks financed auction sales for pure bred animals and for surplus livestock. In 15 years this teamwork has brought prosperity to a wide territory.[1]

In certain cases without doubt the machinery of cooperation between town and country directed by town leaders is a bit too much in evidence to result in the sort of relationship that is to be desired. If the farmers feel that the programs are a means to an end, instead of being an end in themselves, there is danger of the development of a certain degree of resentment. For example, the opening of membership in the town chambers of commerce to farmers has not always meant a real gain for cooperation. Friendly gestures not based upon true insight may be worse than useless. The farmer will patronize the business places in his near-by town if he feels that it is convenient and profitable for him to do so. He will not enter upon cordial social relations with the people of the town unless he and they meet upon a plane of common interests as social equals.

3. The highest level of relationship is attained by those townsmen and farmers who are able to forget at times that they have business dealings with one another and mutually enjoy one another's companionship. Merchants and farmers, as such, can never experience the finest pleasures of association. Unless they forget occupational differences and points of view, their contacts are bound to be largely external. Sitting side by side at a town-country dinner is not enough. Merely to label a gathering

[1] Taber, L. J., "Farm-city Cooperation," *Rural America*, February, 1929.

"town and country," however much good will may be in evidence, is to serve notice that two sorts of people are in attendance. Vital friendships transcend rural-urban and occupational barriers, and it is mainly through such friendships that the individual personality is expanded and enriched.

Desirability of Cooperation among Towns as a Factor Making for Improved Relations between Farmers and Town Dwellers

The best relationship, both economic and otherwise, between townspeople and farmers is hampered because of a lack of teamwork among the towns. Each town tends to maintain a point of view which had its development in the period before the coming of modern means of transportation. In those earlier days, the barriers of physical isolation did much to limit the range of town-farm contacts. Each small town was the natural center of a fairly definite rural area. In general, each farm family identified itself more or less closely with the nearest small town. The coming of the automobile and improved roads inevitably unsettled the old relationships. Small-town business leaders naturally desired to maintain all of their existing farmer patronage and, if they were normally ambitious, to increase it through reaching a larger area. The farm families coming under the influence of the resulting increased competition among towns began to consider more discriminatingly the matter of town contacts. Uncertainty and confusion for both townspeople and farmers quite naturally characterized the readjustment period ushered in by the advent of the motor car. Many farm families now distribute their business contacts among two, three, or four small towns, while others have completely severed their relationships with the towns that formerly provided the most of their non-farm contacts.[1] Small-town merchants and other business and professional men are affected variously by the new conditions. The enlarged area of competition means increased possibilities of both financial success and failure. The general result, in any case, is one of disorganization with its attendant waste of human energies.

Obviously the thing to be desired is a new stability organized in terms of the new conditions of life. Choice rather than isolation is bound to furnish the basis of the new town-farm relationships. Ideally there would develop such teamwork among towns that the choices of farmers would naturally develop in such a way as to eliminate the wasteful confusion so prevalent at the present time. The business men of each town should be enabled to concentrate their energies upon offering the sorts of goods and services that they may, because of the various

[1] Michigan State College, "A Study of Town-country Relationships," *Special Bulletin* 181.

factors involved, including the size of their town and its distance from other towns of larger size, be presumed to be able to offer efficiently and profitably. Such a program would mean that each town that persisted in the new order would be a cooperating member in a system of towns rather than an individualistic unit in conflict with all of its neighbors.

The competitive drive in the direction of increased efficiency will certainly make for increased orderliness in the relations existing among towns, therefore between town business men and farmers. There is good reason to believe that this greater business efficiency will be brought about more and more largely through centralized control of separate kinds of services in the cities. Small-town business men are prevented from working well with others in the same town, and more especially with those of neighboring towns, in part because of their isolationist, individualistic traditions. Large business concerns of the cities in their search for profits have been enabled to establish and maintain branch institutions in the smaller towns in competition with privately owned establishments. These organizations have the advantages of large-scale operation and expert direction and seem to be certain in the long run to win out against the uncoordinated efforts of small businesses, conducted according to traditional methods. For the sake of business efficiency in this new day of rapid and easy communication and transportation, coordination must replace separatism. If small towns are not successful in bringing about a cooperative system for themselves, they will have it done for them from without.

Orderly and mutually satisfactory business relationships between town people and farmers are an essential basis for mutually satisfying social relationships. If the two groups are not antagonistic to one another in the field of business affairs, there is the possibility of their getting together in a social way. If, as has been predicted in the paragraph just preceding, small-town business enterprises are to become increasingly parts of urban industrial systems, this development will not lack its social consequences. If the farmer does his buying in chain grocery and drug stores, his banking in a branch unit of a large-city institution, and gets a part of his recreation in a motion picture theater owned and managed by city men, he is quite certain to relate himself to the city more completely than one might upon first thought suppose. The more complete integration of the social life of the nation which this implies would seem to be desirable from the standpoint of all those concerned. American civilization is very definitely a city-centered one. Any high degree of isolation of rural communities or of individual farm families from the streams of influence forever flowing out from the city centers may well be thought of as an unhealthy condition, good neither from the standpoint of the isolated groups nor from that of the nation

at large. Just as farming people should be served in a business way with all of the efficiency that skilled urban business managers can develop to meet their needs, they should have easy access to whatever else there may be of urban origin that can have value for them. The national life should be so organized that farming people might readily have a feeling of oneness with those urban leaders in every field of endeavor who can through their leadership be of service to them.

For the most part, as has previously been remarked, the direct contacts of farmers with urban life must be made in small towns, which from the present point of view may be thought of as the outposts or the more or less attenuated extensions of larger urban centers. For the most perfect functioning of the community made up of both town residents and farmers, association between members of the two groups should be on as free a basis as possible. The town-centered area in which reside all of the members of the community is a physical unit. The thing to be desired is that the residents of this physically unified area may not be prevented by artificial social barriers from enjoying as complete a sense of membership in a unified social whole as a normal development of their individual natures will allow them to enjoy. The man who makes his living by growing agricultural products, and who lives on his land situated three or four miles from the main corner of the village, should have the opportunity of feeling that he is as truly a citizen of the town as is the man who makes his living in the business of banking and resides but three or four blocks away from the corner on which his bank is located.

A Legal Barrier to the Development of Community Consciousness

One artificial social barrier of considerable importance is to be found in the fact that farmers, in general, are not included legally within the incorporated village community. The closely clustered houses of business and professional men and of laborers are encircled by the legal line marking the "limits" of the village. The more widely scattered homes of farmers lie outside the village limits. Thus one occupational group, whose industry has made as real a contribution to whatever degree of prosperity the town may be enjoying as that of any of the other groups, is kept from sharing as fully as are the others in the enjoyment of that prosperity. The farmer and his family are legally only visitors in the town which they are helping to maintain. The legally organized village may or may not treat the people of the surrounding farms with consideration. It gives them whatever privileges it may see fit. Obviously, for the most perfect development of community consciousness, the legal unit should coincide with the actual community, or with what should become the actual community; and ideally every farm home should be included in some community extending out from its town center. Dr.

C. J. Galpin and other writers have suggested the desirability of the establishment of systems of zones about towns. According to such a plan all farmers living in the trade area of a town would be legally citizens of the town. Those living, however, in the zones nearest the center, in the very nature of the case, could be provided with certain advantages not so readily available to those living at a greater distance, such as, for example, the use of fire-fighting apparatus housed in the town. Taxation would be proportional to the number of advantages made available. Hardly a beginning has as yet been made in the matter of state legislation granting communities the right of incorporation. Such a development is bound to come slowly, and it is to be expected that the conservatism of farming people will be one of the greatest obstacles in the path of its achievement.

Need for Town Leadership

If the chasm which has traditionally separated farmers from others is to be bridged, it must be done very largely under the influence of non-farm leadership. It is the people of the towns who are prepared through experience with various types of non-vocational organizations who are better qualified to furnish this leadership. As the town group is the group of superior prestige in the general social life, it is strategically better situated to furnish effective leadership. The social self-sufficiency of town dwellers is bound to stand in the way of the use of leadership enthusiasm and power for the purpose of drawing farming people into a more complete sharing of the common life. There is good reason to hope, however, that increasing external contacts between town people and farmers will awaken the former to the realization that farming people are as likely as any other group to be possessed individually of traits of character and of personality worthy of general consideration. Self-sufficiency is bound to be seriously weakened when those who were previously self-sufficient discover that there are those outside of the old group who have it in them to contribute much of value in a social way if they be but properly met and encouraged.

The farm-non-farm chasm, in so far as it exists, is of decided disadvantage to the farmer, viewed from the standpoint of his possibilities for broadly human development. Social differentiation into classes is without doubt inevitable. Such differentiation, however, should be functional, based upon vital differences characterizing various elements in the whole population. It may be that the family-unit organization of farmers is a sufficiently influential differentiating factor to prevent farmers and others from ever, as long as this type of organization prevails, getting together in any truly cooperative way. Ideally, the farmer should be able, while still remaining a farmer, to take a "we" attitude toward whatever of good is being accomplished in the cities. The

group life which he immediately shares should be of the sort to lead him naturally to identify himself with worth-while interests and activities, urban as well as rural. A "they" attitude upon his part toward the people of the cities is sure to be more or less unsympathetic, inclining him to stand in opposition to much that he might naturally favor merely because it chances to be of urban origin. Thus, both for his own sake and for that of society at large, nothing should stand as a hindrance to his entering into a whole-hearted identification of self with good things urban.

CHAPTER XXI

PROGRESS

Progress is social change, or evolution, in the direction of an ideal goal. Obviously, not all change is progressive. Only such may be so considered as makes for an enrichment of life. If the enrichment of life which follows a social change is experienced by only the few, while the many are at the same time plunged into conditions less ideal than those they formerly experienced, the change cannot be described as truly progressive. The whole matter of progress is made more complicated by the fact that progressive change apparently does not proceed along what might be conceived of as a straight line connecting any point in the past with some point in the future taken to represent the ultimate ideal. The path which society follows seems to be a zigzag path, and no one can say that the apparently retrogressive phases of this movement are not indirectly progressive. In football, the man with the ball frequently must reverse his steps in order to get ahead. Sometimes, too, he accidentally slips and falls, only to find his apparent loss surprisingly turned into a significant gain for his team.

Certain Bases for a Belief in Progress

There are people who deny the possibility of social progress, saying, in the first place, that there can be no general agreement as to the nature of a desirable goal to be attained and, in the second place, that those who do agree fairly well as to the goal cannot agree as to the proper procedure to be followed in arriving at it. One may grant that progress by its very nature is the sort of thing which cannot well be demonstrated, and yet he may maintain a very intelligent belief in its reality. Some of the bases for such a belief are the following:

1. Men quite generally do, at times, picture to themselves what they consider to be a better world than that of their present.

2. A fair proportion of these men do put some time and energy into the task of attempting to bring this better world into existence.

3. The new means of communication tend to broaden the mental horizons of those men who are at all inherently susceptible to broadening influences, so that the pictures they form of a better world are constructed on less narrow lines than was formerly the case. In other words, narrow individualism is on the decline. A broader social outlook is taking its place.

4. Research in the social sciences is giving to those who wish to know additional knowledge as to how to proceed most effectively to realize whatever social ideals they may possess.

Differences of opinion as to the desirable goals to be striven for and as to the desirable means to be used in the striving are undoubtedly bound to persist until the end of time. It would seem, however, a reasonable hope that out of the struggle carried on in a world of widened social vision and increasing social intelligence may come a gradually bettered life for the masses of mankind.

Material advancement is an unquestioned fact. More and more things are constantly being placed at the disposal of humanity. Through its mechanical inventiveness, mankind is devising an accelerated series of objects for its use, and, through its development of labor-saving machinery, it is possible to produce these objects in increasing numbers per unit of human energy expended. It is possible, however, that the increased amount of material goods may be so distributed among mankind as to decrease rather than to increase the total amount of human satisfaction derived therefrom. Advancement in the field of medicine is very real. Physical life is being lengthened, and physical pain and suffering are being reduced through the aid of medical science. Mere length of life and absence of physical discomfort, however, are at best only negative aspects of a satisfying existence. Man's life is essentially mental rather than physical, and social rather than individual. The good life must be described in terms of mental satisfactions derived through social relationships.

An Ideal Social Goal

Because of the fact that social relationships are not at all nicely divided between the rural and the urban, a social goal for the larger society should be held in mind by those who would evolve programs for progress in any particular part of the field. The writer suggests such a goal in the following sketchy description of what he takes to be an ideal society. All of the members of this ideal society would possess what Professor Cooley refers to as healthy selves, selves characterized by a sense of self-expression, of appreciation, and of security. Every individual in this society, in other words, would be so related to the other members of this larger group of whom he had knowledge that in the life that he lived he would experience a pleasant thrill of satisfaction in the consciousness of being well situated.

This ideal world would not be a world of equality or of uniformity. The individuals making it up would vary widely in innate capacities and in their likes and dislikes. Individuals with such unteachable natures, however, that they could not learn that they were inherently less capable than many others and could not be aided to take an intelligent view of

their relationship to the general social order could not be allowed to have a place in it. The elimination of such extreme types is the business of eugenics which has no inconsiderable part to play in the development of what we are taking to be an ideal world. In such a world, each individual would be possessed of an hereditary nature of such a sort that he could be taught to live a socially useful and a socially happy life.

Such a society would most carefully guard childhood against influences that would narrow or warp its development. Anything like an ideal social order is out of the question unless children are properly reared. It would seem to be one of the most important functions of the larger society to furnish each child born the opportunity for wholesome individual development. The state has made a beginning of this task through the enactment of child-labor legislation and compulsory school laws. It must, however, go much further along this same road if children in general are to receive the sort of start in life that will make possible the most effective living in their adult years.

First of all, the larger society must concern itself with the earliest home life of infants. At the present time, the burden of proof rests with the outside world to show that in specific cases parents are not fit to care for their children. It may be that the situation will become completely reversed, necessitating parents to give positive evidence of fitness in order to be allowed the right of daily association with their children and any measure of control over them. It is conceivable that in our ideal society a considerable number of individuals may be most valuable members of the social order, well fitted biologically to become parents, who are not sufficiently well fitted temperamentally to be intrusted with the direction and care of the children whom they have brought into the world.

In the opinion of some writers, the home as we have known it is bound to go out of existence, all children being cared for entirely by other agencies. It may be, however, as the writer believes, that the good home, supplemented as it may be by the nursery school, has certain advantages over any other conceivable agency as the developing place of young children and that there will always be a significant proportion of parents desirous and well qualified to maintain such homes for their children. In any case, in the ideal society under consideration, children will not be permitted to suffer the vicious influences of poor home life.

The traditional home exerts a powerful influence on the child. While much of this influence has been, and is, extremely beneficial, much of it, also, is anything but helpful in preparing the immature individual for the most complete, well-rounded sort of living in his years of maturity. Without going greatly into detail concerning the harmful home influences from which an ideal society would guard its children, one may mention at

this point merely the matter of prejudices of various sorts which are developed even in great numbers of so-called "good" families. Political, religious, occupational, moral prejudices instilled into a child's plastic mind may prevent his ever developing freely the innate capacities with which he was endowed so that he may live a richly satisfying and wholesomely constructive life in his later years. Caste pressure, whether exerted through the agency of the family-farm or through that of urban business organizations which the young men of certain families, generation after generation, enter as a matter of course, makes for occupational narrowness characterized by prejudice. In an ideal world, men would not enter their life work as a matter of course but would find their careers on the basis of intelligent choice.

This intelligent choice which would characterize life in an ideal social order might lead a very large proportion of young people to enter the parental occupation. It is to be supposed that such a choice would be to the advantage of both the individual and the larger society in great numbers of cases. The essential point, however, is that the personality of the individual should be guarded against confiscation by the selfish interest of possibly well-meaning parents. Each individual should be assured the right to his own life, and the larger society has no more important function than that of guarding him against influences parental and otherwise that would in any way deprive him of that right.

Assuming the individual to have been endowed through heredity with capacities entitling him to a place in the ideal society and to have been afforded the opportunity for a proper sort of childhood development of his innate nature, one finds him entering the complex occupational life of the modern world on the basis of choice and competition. Owing to his early training, he would have learned how to take defeat without bitterness. He would have learned that, while it is important that one should whole-heartedly attempt to secure the place in life which he may desire, it is equally important that one should desire the place which he may secure. Most men in college who desire to make the football team find the competition too strong and are obliged to admit defeat. If they have entered the competitive struggle with the spirit of true sportsmen, they take their defeat gracefully and do one of two things: finish out their years in college being of what service they may on the reserves or abandon football and enter as whole-heartedly as before some other activity which seems to offer them a more promising field of achievement. Ideally, the larger society would function in this regard as do college activities at their best. With rules of the game insuring fairness to all competitors, with the competitors themselves prepared to take life as they find it in the spirit of true sportsmanship, in the constant and stimulating give and take of a never-ending process of adjustment—thus life would proceed.

In the occupational adjustment which each individual would make in this ideal world, he would be so situated that he would experience the three satisfactions of the healthy self above referred to. In the first place, he would enjoy the sense of self-expression. At the close of each usual day he would be able to feel that the day had been good from the standpoint of his personal accomplishment. In other words, he would enjoy his work for its own sake, not merely as something to be gotten through with for the sake of the pay envelope or for that of the recreation and rest to which a hard day's work would entitle him. A man's life is indeed impoverished if it is merely in his hours of recreation that he may find pleasure. The best-adjusted individuals in every walk of life enjoy their work as does the artist the fine effects obtained through his technique. In the ideal society, all the members would experience such an artistic satisfaction in their work.

Whether or not the tending of automatic machinery in the modern factory can be made to contribute to the sense of self-expression of most of those who are to engage in that type of labor may be left an open question as far as the present discussion is concerned. There is some reason for believing that a proper sort of education for those who are to do that work would fit them for experiencing a stimulating exhilaration in the thought of being a part of a great enterprise, men and machines together, accomplishing a significant thing in the realm of material production. Man mastered the tool and experienced a sense of self-expression in the mastery. All who work in the modern factory, except comparatively few experts, are servants of the machine. Some men have such an admiration for the almost human machine which they serve that their need for self-expression is largely satisfied in that service. It may be that this attitude will become general. Unless it does become general, then it must be admitted that the machine age is essentially an age of slavery.

Closely allied and contributing to the sense of self-expression is that of appreciation. In the ideal world each individual would realize that excellence in his chosen line of endeavor would bring him the favorable attention and admiring respect of those of his associates who understood what he was trying to accomplish. Each individual would be a member of a group who would view his activities in a spirit of understanding, and who would be competent to furnish him the criticism essential for worthwhile achievement in any field.

Referring again to college activities, one can easily find illustrations of the powerful influence of specialized groups upon their individual members through their bestowal of praise for excellent achievement. In athletics, debating, dramatics, and the various other specialized activities, individuals are spurred on to their highest achievement through their membership in understanding groups who are always ready with appre-

ciation for at least the obviously successful piece of work. Even scholarship, one of the more neglected of college interests, seems to be improving in recent years through the organization of honor groups of students who place high value upon scholarly achievements.

In the larger society, there are many such specialized groups affording to their members this essential of the healthy self. The various fine arts and the professions are thus organized, as are also various branches of business. Successful salesmen are honored and rewarded in various ways by both employers and colleagues for their success, and in this appreciation they find significance in their work which cannot be measured in dollars and cents. In the ideal society, life would be so organized that all individuals would be afforded the opportunity of working in an atmosphere of appreciation for successful endeavor in their chosen activity.

To the extent that factory labor does not furnish the worker with the chance to identify his real self with his job, it deprives him of the opportunity to receive appreciation for enthusiastic and capable service, thus driving him to seek most of his life thrills in activities not associated with his daily work and possibly of socially harmful kinds. It may be that it is possible for laborers, individually, to become so much a vital part of the concerns for which they work that they may derive a wholesome self-respect merely through their association with significant organizations. A record-breaking trip of an ocean liner must bring a thrill of satisfaction to the most insignificant member of the crew, who may have contributed nothing personally to increase the speed of passage. Merely to belong in a real way to a notably successful concern may enhance the experience of living for the most inconspicuous of men. Merely to have been with Grant at Appomattox was glory enough for many a humble private to last him a life time. It is perfectly conceivable that industry may at some future time be so humanly organized that the rank and file of common laborers will be as devoted adherents of their particular plants as college undergraduates are in general to the colleges of their choice. Merely to be a Harvard, a Yale, a Michigan, or a Wisconsin man is enough to give thousands of students a wholesome self-respect.

While the individual laborers in factory and office at the present time are largely lacking in self-expression and in a consciousness of appreciation, owing to the minute specialization of their tasks and to their inability to identify themselves in any vital way with the organizations which they serve, the farmer suffers from as real disabilities of an opposite sort.

In the first place, the farmer is very greatly underspecialized. His work is made up of such a wide variety of skills that it is not humanly possible for him to excel in any large proportion of them, and the reasonably successful man may be as well known in the community for his

failures as for his successes. Many men, when these labors were performed by hand, established records for husking corn, digging potatoes, or shearing sheep. They may or may not have derived much self-respect from their successes in narrow fields of endeavor. The appreciation they received from their neighbors may have done more harm than good in case it led the recipients of it to be satisfied with distinguished success in a very minor part of the total job. Breeders of prize-winning cattle or swine are not necessarily worthy of being called good farmers. Their high achievement in a narrow field of endeavor may be of as high order as that of most successful urban men, and yet they may have cause to realize that they are only mediocre farmers, owing to the wide variety of essential skills making up the occupation.

Quite recently in certain Middle Western states, the attempt has been made to confer distinction upon a chosen few of the supposedly more successful men in the farming occupation by giving them the title of "master farmer." The attempt is without doubt a worthy one. The all-round ability of the master farmer is of more lasting significance to the community and to society in general than is the more highly specialized skill of, say, a champion corn husker. It is, however, much more difficult to test and, owing to the lack of obviously dramatic quality in all-round general achievement, the reward is likely to be a somewhat colorless paper reward, rather than the vivid consciousness of real appreciation spontaneously evoked in the minds of the community. The very winning of such an honor for general efficiency is likely to call the attention of the neighbors to what they feel to be the farmer's failure in specifically concrete lines of achievement. The farmer's task is so complex and varied that he is bound to lack the opportunity for the most satisfying degree of self-expression in it; also for the same reasons does he lack the appreciation which he might hope to earn in activities more highly specialized and standardized.

The farmer is likely to lack in pride in his achievement, also, because of the relative insignificance of his small farm in the general scheme of things. It is a time of stupendous enterprises, of mammoth productive concerns. Public attention and acclaim are evoked by the spectacle of size and power. Small men may draw great self-respect from mere association with what are commonly felt to be important undertakings. No one doubts the great importance of the agricultural industry, but the farmer knows that his individual small farm is quite unimportant in the world scheme of things. Especially in these days of overproduction, were the earth to open and swallow the typical small farmer and his farm, life would be little if any the poorer *economically* because of that fact. Under such conditions, the farmer has small chance to benefit from a sense of satisfaction in his occupational significance.

Security, the third essential of the healthy self, would be assured each individual in the ideal society. He would be enabled to feel, while at his work, the protective influence of society guarding him against the various contingencies of life the dread of which at the present time prevents so many from leading a reasonabbl unworried existence.

Ideally, security may never be so complete as to relieve the individual from the necessity of whole-hearted exertion, and to just what extent it should be provided is obviously a question of wise social expediency. Unless industrial concerns do provide it for their employees to such an extent as to guard them against the debilitating effects of worry in regard to the continuance of their jobs through the years when they are able to work, and in regard to their support during the years of feebleness and old age, the industrial system is in that respect lacking in humanity. In order that the individual may whole-heartedly and enthusiastically identify himself with the concern for which he works, he must be able to feel that the organization conceives of him in human terms and is delicately responsive to his human needs.

Possibly, more and more, laborers will organize to provide for themselves through cooperation the security which the individual so much needs. Through some social agency, every individual in an ideally organized world would be given such a degree of protection that he might labor with an assurance born of the realization that he has no cause for worry in regard to the contingencies of life over which he can have no control.

Of the three essentials of the healthy self, security is the one most frequently realized by farming people. Traditionally, it is the one that is made the most of for them. They have been taught by their parents and grandparents to accept the fact that much of their labor is bound to be unpleasant, in other words not truly expressive of their innate natures, and that they need not expect much in the nature of general social appreciation for what they may accomplish. They have been told, however, that they can well afford to let these things go for the sake of a security that is denied many who are not fortunate enough to live on farms. Even well-to-do farmers when asked how life is going with them are more than likely to reply in terms of mere physical security—enough to eat, a comfortable bed, and an assured surplus put away for old age. They are apt to talk of these things in a manner which implies the question, "What more can any man want?" betokening an entire lack of comprehension of the wealth of *positive* satisfactions that many people derive from their experience with living. While security is an essential condition to the development of the other characteristics of the healthy self, it alone is merely negative.

Social reformers, professional and otherwise, under whatever names they may be working and whatever they may consider their immediate

objectives, would seem to have no other valid ultimate goal in this modern world than a reconstituted life of such a sort that all men would share the positive satisfactions which at the present time are experienced by only the few. It is well enough to say that such an ideal state of affairs as this implies can never be attained In any case, movement in the direction of that goal is progress, and there is in the process of its development a challenging task for ambitious idealists of every type and degree of ability.

Does Progress Involve Increased Happiness?

Increased happiness is a perfectly worthy aim of the individual. However much we may enjoy life, still greater enjoyment is, from the individual point of view, if one looks at it properly, the only thing worth striving for. Individuals are characterized by the things that make them happy. Fine men and women are known to be such by the fine pleasures which they seek; ignoble, mean, petty individuals are just as truly to be identified by what gives them enjoyment, the distinction between the fine and the unfine obviously being based upon the standard of values of the one who is drawing the distinction.

Because there are various levels of quality in the types of activities contributing to human happiness, to say that one wishes to increase the happiness of mankind is to give expression to a most indefinite aim. Increase of happiness as a general social program is virtually meaningless. If the social reformer should go out into life with simply the increase of others' happiness as his mission, he would soon give up the business in despair. He would find those living in the most backward communities, apparently, from all outward appearances, as happy as any others in the land. He might end by feeling that every group should be left to its own peculiar type of happiness, or he might become a propagandist, attempting to convince all with whom he came in contact that his own particular type of happiness was to be preferred to all others, or he might, best of all, give up increased happiness as the goal of social reform.

Backward communities and groups, both rural and urban, need not to be made more happy; they need rather, for the sake of progress, to be freed from their backward condition. In an ideal society, there would be no backward communities. The condition of backwardness consists essentially in narrowness of outlook due to a limited range of suggestions, brought about, in turn, by a high degree of isolation from the general current of human thought. A legitimate and constructive aim of social reform is to break through such walls of isolation, wherever they may be found, carrying to those within as large a fund of ideas as may be made available. This will not in general increase happiness, but it will bring an increase in richness of human experience. The enrichment

of experience involves an increase in the number of things that make one happy; it involves also an increase in the sources of pain and sorrow. It means a more complete sharing of life's experiences, necessitating a widened scope for the exercise of choice. From the standpoint of the larger society, the freeing of backward groups from their backwardness results in an increase of efficiency through bringing more individuals into effective service of the whole. From the standpoint of the individual who experiences this change, it means a more abundant life, which he may or may not think of as involving a net increase of happiness.

Society in General Responsible for the Extent of Progress Achieved by the Farmer Class

There are grave reasons for doubting the ability of the farming population by itself to achieve much in the way of true progress. Great numbers of individual farming people, especially of the young, set for themselves worthy goals for personal advancement. Movement towards these goals is extremely likely to carry the more ambitious and capable individuals out and away from the farming group into some of the more highly specialized fields of life in the cities. The elevation of individuals here and there from conditions of cultural impoverishment to those allowing for a fuller development and expression of personality is a relatively simple process. Any significant enhancement of the conditions of life of a whole class is a much slower and difficult matter. Reasons have been advanced in an earlier chapter in support of the belief that the relative position of the farming class, of those who do the common labor in agriculture, is being lowered at the present time from one of middle-class status to a position somewhat further down the scale. It is entirely possible that this lowering process will be accompanied by the development of more desirable life conditions for the members of the class. Relative social status is one thing, while the organization of life conditions as affecting one's opportunity for a satisfactory human existence is quite another.

The condition of the less privileged classes, both rural and urban, in America is very largely the responsibility of the whole society. It is especially the responsibility of the more influential groups, those who are powerful out of all proportion to their numbers because of the possession of wealth or of certain types of education. Much is being written in these times of depression (1930–1931) about the desirability of national planning. If any thoroughgoing national plan of production and distribution of material goods were substituted for the present chaotic lack of system, the laboring classes, including those engaged in agriculture, would have achieved a general social recognition which they do not now possess. It may be the case, as many writers insist, that, if the

national plan should provide greatly increased purchasing power for the less well-to-do classes, this would increase, in the long run, the profits of those who are so situated that they may live from profits. Even should it result in some diminution of profits, it is conceivable that the change would be a good thing for America.

Any thoroughgoing national plan including in its scope the improvement of the condition of agriculture to the double end of significantly increasing the purchasing power of those engaged in the industry and of rendering the industry as efficient an element as possible in the national scheme would quite surely result more or less directly in the elimination of the family-farm unit. Whether or not the so-called "independence," or industrial planlessness traditional in America, is upon the whole an advantage, the survival of the family-farm system down into our day would seem to be one most unfortunate aspect of this way of life. Social progress for farming people is seriously impeded in large part because of the nature of their economic organization. For reasons presented elsewhere in this volume, the farming class is incapable by itself under the conditions which now prevail of altering to any significant degree its economic organization.

In the absence of a far-reaching national plan which should succeed in elevating agriculture into a position of economic equality with other industries and at the same time in bringing about a condition much more favorable to the laboring groups of every industry than now obtains, something, it is true, may be hoped for in the way of an advance for farming people. Within the limits which the family-farm system sets up, there is opportunity at the present time under exceptionally favorable conditions for individuals to live satisfying lives. Through an increasing development of these conditions the number of such farmers may be increased.

The thing to be desired for the person on the farm, whether he be a member of a family-unit industrial group or not, is the same thing that is to be desired for every other person in our society: that he may have the sense of living richly in a large and interesting world; that he may enjoy his work in a positive way rather than in the merely negative fashion of being barely able to endure it; that he may experience at least at times a sense of satisfaction in feeling that his best efforts are being appreciated by colleagues and other observers who are competent to judge the quality of his work; that he may have the constant assurance that the machinery of society is so adjusted to his human needs that he will be adequately cared for, both economically and otherwise, in times of stress.

Every person who has achieved such a satisfactory adjustment to life as that indicated above has been aided in various ways. He has not accomplished it alone. He has been unusually fortunate in the

combination of circumstances which have surrounded him. In this new day of enlarging social consciousness, it is a reasonable hope that deliberate and large-scale social activity may increasingly supplant the relatively unorganized, sporadic, and planless social efforts of the past. Social progress is not progress at all unless it takes the form of increased richness of experience for the men and women who make up society. One large class of our population which stands greatly in need of every bit of social aid which may be organized in its behalf is the farming class.

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